Once again, we always want to welcome our television audience. We appreciate hearing from you—for your prayers and your financial help. We had a letter the other day that started, “Dear Les and Iris, If it weren’t for you, I’d still be lost,” and he signed his name. Well, that’s not much. But on the other hand, that’s a load. After all, what more could you hope for? It is just thrilling to get letters from our television audience.

You may notice that my voice is not as strong as usual. That is because we just got back from a stringent, but glorious, teaching trip back East in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina. When you teach five, six, or seven hours in a row, then two hours every night, and then another all-day Saturday seminar, it begins to tell on the vocal cords. But it was a glorious trip. And we just praise the Lord for every opportunity.

But now we’re here to study. So come right back where we left off in the last program. That would be in II Thessalonians chapter 2, and we’ll read verse 14 again.

**II Thessalonians 2:14**

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel (We covered that rather in-depth in the last half hour. How that Paul over and over refers to this Gospel of Grace as his gospel of salvation, because it was revealed first and foremost to this apostle to take to the Gentile world.) to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Maybe that’s a good time to go back. I don’t like to run something into the ground. Yet when something is so appropriate, I can’t help but use it. So in that regard—that it was Paul’s Gospel because of the revelations given to him by the ascended Lord—let’s turn to II Peter chapter 3. I’ve used these verses a lot lately, because I suddenly realized that these verses say so much coming from the pen of the Apostle Peter—who also writes by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit that Paul does. Yet it is so obvious that this is where so much of Christendom is missing the boat. Much of Christendom today doesn’t listen to what Peter says, much less Paul.

**II Peter 3:15a**

“And account (or understand) that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; (the same salvation that we’ve been talking about up here in II Thessalonians) even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him…”
What’s Peter talking about? Those revelations that were given unto Paul! It was those same revelations that those other apostles never knew anything of. We know that Peter and Paul came to an agreement on that in Galatians 2:7-9 when they shook hands. The agreement was: Paul and Barnabas would continue on with their ministry to the Gentiles with the Gospel of Grace. Which, remember, is believing in your heart for salvation that Jesus died for your sins, was buried, and rose again! Plus NOTHING!

Whereas Peter and the Eleven would continue their ministry to the nation of Israel with the Gospel of the Kingdom—which was faith in believing Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. Then they were commanded to repent and be baptized in water, as seen in Acts 2:38. We know that so many mix and match the two.

This is what Peter is no doubt alluding to. This revelation that had been given to the Apostle Paul that he and the other Eleven knew nothing of. So he says:

**II Peter 3:15b**

“...even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom (the revelations of the mystery) given unto him hath written unto you;” Now the next verse confirms what Paul had said all along—that he had given us the truth of the Word of God. Paul’s epistles are just as much Scripture as the five books of Moses or the Psalms or the prophets or the four gospels or anything else—because Peter by inspiration says in verse 16:

**II Peter 3:16a**

“As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; (these things which pertain to salvation) in which are some things hard to be understood,...” The reason Peter couldn’t understand these things was because he was a legalist. And for Peter to fully understand the Gospel of Grace—I can see where he had problems. He says it.

**II Peter 3:16b**

“...in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (Or twist—and we know that’s obvious even today. But now here it comes.) as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” So what does that make Paul’s epistles? Scripture! Even from the pen of the Apostle Peter who is telling us. We must always remember that.

I’ve said so often when I’ve used the previous verse: Why didn’t Peter say up there in verse 15, that for the plan of salvation you should listen to what I’ve told you. Or you should listen to what Jesus said in His earthly ministry, or what John tells us. But Peter doesn’t say that. But rather he keeps us only on one area, and that area is what Paul has said!

Back when we started Romans, I quoted one of the former presidents of Princeton University who served back in 1888-1892. I didn’t bring the quote with me today, but I’ll try to get it close. But what he said was essentially this, Christendom either has to go back, back, back to
the epistles of Paul, or it is on and on to apostasy and despair. Now he spoke that many years ago, and what a loaded truth. It is either back to Paul and his epistles, or it’s on to apostasy and despair. Well, what has the Church for the most part done? They’ve gone on to apostasy and despair—and the apostasy that’s running rampant!

William R. Newell in one of his books, writing in 1937, in one of his footnotes wrote—and he wasn’t pinpointing any one denomination—but he said, “As fast as modernism is coming into the churches, I can foresee the day where the only place you will hear the truth of the Word of God will be in a home Bible study.” Well, we’re getting there fast, no doubt about it, because much of Christendom is apostatizing. They hear everything but the truth. Not all churches are like that – there are some good ones still out there. But there are not nearly as many as there were 50 to 100 years ago.

All right, so Peter admonishes them to go back to the epistles of Paul. That’s why I spend as much time emphasizing that as I do. Now back to II Thessalonians chapter 2, if you will, reading 14 again for review.

II Thessalonians 2:14-15a

“Whereunto he called you by our gospel, (Paul’s Gospel of Salvation, the one Peter just told you to go and look for.) to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15. Therefore, brethren, (Remember, he’s writing to believers.) stand fast,…”

What was Paul talking about there? Positionally! Doctrinally! Now, in another place he says, “Do not be driven to and fro with every wind of doctrine.” Because, you see, beginning with the very first little groups of believers that he established up there in Asia Minor and then a little later across the Aegean Sea to Greece and finally on over to Rome—all those little congregations of Paul’s converts were immediately subjected to false teachings of one sort or another. False teaching is nothing new. It’s been rampant from day one. It’s a wonder that the truth has survived. It really is. Because the truth of Paul’s Gospel of Salvation was under all kind of attacks.

First the Judaizers – and we’ve dealt with that over and over in the past. What were they trying to maintain? That Paul’s converts could not be saved unless they practiced circumcision and kept the Mosaic Law, as you find in Acts chapter 15. In other words, they had to be proselytes of Judaism. Then when we get into I Corinthians chapter 15, there were those who came in and basically said there was no such thing as resurrection. There’s no such thing as being raised from the dead. Well, Paul says, and I’m paraphrasing—if Christ be not raised from the dead, we of all people are most miserable. Because that is the basis of our faith!

Then you had those that came in and abused the Grace of God and said, look, you can use the Grace of God for the spiritual side, but let the human side live to the limit and satisfy the passions and appetites of the flesh. And that became a false teaching. And you’d be surprised at how many people fell for that. Then there were those who came to the other extreme and said you couldn’t be a Christian unless you were totally suppressed in your existence. You couldn’t enjoy anything, because that would destroy the spirit.
Well, all these false teachings have been pummeling the true Church from day one. And even today we’re seeing all these false teachings. People send me stuff off the internet. It’s unbelievable what’s up there. You can find anything you want to look for, and it is bringing confusion. Most had rather read the garbage that’s on the internet than to get into the Word. Now, I know there’s good stuff on the internet. Even my stuff is up there. But we have to be discerning. Always line it up with the Scriptures. And if we’re talking about salvation and Church doctrine, line it up with Paul’s writings. Now verse 15 again:

**II Thessalonians 2:15a**

“**Therefore, brethren, stand fast…**” Don’t be blown over by every false teaching that comes along.

Come back for a moment with me to the Book of Galatians chapter 5, where he used that same terminology. We’ll begin with verse 1. The reason I like to use these various Scriptures—you know, as Paul sent these letters out, sometimes written a year or two apart, he did not purposely say, now I’ve got to repeat in this Galatians letter what I wrote to the Thessalonians. No, as the Holy Spirit led and gave him utterance, this is what he wrote.

**Galatians 5:1a**

“**Stand fast** (positionally and doctrinally) **therefore in the liberty…**” That almost seems like an oxymoron—to stand fast in liberty. Because what’s liberty? Freedom! Now if he had said, stand fast in this little narrow box that I have built around you. That would be understandable, wouldn’t it? That’s what legalists try to do. They try to box you in so that you don’t have any freedom to exercise liberty. You do this. You can’t do that and so forth. They want you to be boxed in. But that’s not what Paul is telling them. He’s telling us to stand fast in this liberty, this freedom.

There was a gentleman at our last taping who had come out of a tremendously legalistic cult type religion as a result of watching a couple of our tapes. He came out of it and, of course, still had a lot of questions. So he called Iris one day and wanted to know if he could come and spend some time with me. Iris said, “Well, they’re still bailing hay, but by next Monday he should have time for you.” Well, I had just finished and was changing my dirty clothes on Saturday evening and he was at the door. He introduced himself, and I said, “Good heavens, you weren’t supposed to be here until Monday.” He said, “I couldn’t wait.”

Now, I can’t imagine what it’s like to be under a legalistic system that gives you no liberty. But I’m sure some of you have also come out of that type of religion. So the gentleman rehearsed with us that for 40 years in this legalistic religion that wouldn’t allow him to lift a finger on the Saturday Sabbath, during the years when he needed income for his family and raising his children the most, he lost 14 jobs because he would not work on Saturday.

Now that is a tough religion. Then he said, “To come out of it and have the shackles just fall away is unbelievable.” Well, you see, that’s the liberty we have in true Christianity. We’re not under a set of rules and regulations that you can’t work on the seventh day or you can’t work on
Sunday, or you can’t do this, and you must do that. Because Grace doesn’t demand that! Grace is Liberty! But I also follow that up with what? Grace is NOT license!

We still have guidelines that keep us within the behavior system of what God wants a Christian to be. I usually use the two concepts of love: love for the Lord Himself on one side and love for our fellow man on the other side. Those become two guidelines that fence in our liberty. But they’re not restrictive. They’re not boxing us in. It’s so easy to comprehend. How am I going to go out and get drunk on Saturday night when I know that is not going to be pleasing to the love of the Lord who bought me? Do you see what I mean? On the other hand, I’m not going to go cheating on my wife. Because if I love her, how can I? So those two guidelines become, yes, a restriction of sort, but it so free. And such liberty that we never have to feel like we’ve been pressed down and shackled. Now that’s what it means to be free and in liberty. Let’s read it again.

Galatians 5:1

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty (Don’t let somebody box you in with religious, legalistic demands.) wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Well, what’s the yoke of bondage? Legalism of whatever sort. Legalism like the gentleman we were talking about earlier went through—can’t work on the seventh day Sabbath. That’s legalism. Now, it can be a lot more than just the seventh day Sabbath. Some say, “My, you can’t eat pork.” Remember, eating pork was also under the Law, and we know it was forbidden under the law. But if you want to have sausage for breakfast, this Book says eat it. Just thank God for it and eat it. But nevertheless, legalism will always say, “No, you can’t!” So it becomes, then, a yoke of bondage. And even Peter recognized it as such.

Let’s come back to Acts 15, and you’ll see Peter himself agreed to that statement. I like folks to see that I’m not so narrow-minded that I can’t ever get out of Paul’s writings. All I’m saying is that when Paul says it, you’d better mark it down, because it applies to us as Gentile believers in the Age of Grace. Now the setting here in Acts 15 is the Jerusalem counsel—where Peter and the other believers have been trying to force Paul and Barnabas to bring their Gentile converts back under the law of Moses. As you read that chapter and Galatians chapter 2, you’ll see that Paul refuses to give into that. Peter finally has his spiritual eyes opened.

Acts 15:10

“Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke (A burden. When they put the ox under the yoke, what was the purpose? To put that animal under the burden of pulling something. So the yoke is a picture of a burden.) upon the neck of the disciples, (Now the word disciples here is talking about Paul’s converts, Paul’s believing Gentiles.) which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”

Could anybody keep the Law? No way! It was an impossible task. It was the yoke under which they labored and suffered. I’ve always said that when the Law was really operating as Moses
first gave it, it was severe. But when Israel degenerated, then they could get by with almost anything. But when the Law was operating in its purity and fullness, it was severe. If they picked up sticks on the Saturday Sabbath, what was the result? Death! Well, if that isn’t severe, then I don’t know what is. That was the yoke of bondage.

All right, today we’re not under those kinds of things. We’ve been set free according to Paul. We are to constantly stand fast in this liberty of the Grace of God in which we now move and live and operate as Grace-Age believers. Now back to II Thessalonians 2:15:

**II Thessalonians 2:15a**

“*Therefore, brethren, stand fast,* (Don’t be deceived. Don’t fall into the trap of a false teaching.) *and hold the traditions…*”

When I started getting ready for this verse, I thought, now Paul and I have been condemning traditions. It’s a bad word in the Scriptures. Because what is tradition? It is following in the footsteps of some man-made ideas. But in this case I chased it down. When Paul uses the word here, he’s really talking about the things that he had taught. The things that he had drummed into the men who were working with him—first, Barnabas, and then Silas, and later on Timothy and Titus. This is what he’s talking about. Hold on to those things that he (Paul) had taught.

Remember, from the time Paul began his ministry among the Gentiles (around A.D. 40), until he wrote the Thessalonian letters in about A.D. 58, is how long? About 18 years that there was no written New Testament. They had the Old Testament, but the Gentiles certainly didn’t know that much of it. So how in the world did these new Gentile believers, fresh out of paganism, survive in their walk of faith? By gifted men who had the gift of prophecy, as we find in I Corinthians chapters 12 and 14. I think chapter 14 will be sufficient.

**I Corinthians 14:1**

“*Follow after charity,* (love) *and desire spiritual gifts,* but *rather* (What is the most important gift for this early Church?) *that ye may prophesy.*”

Many people do not realize that the word “prophesy” as we see it here in the New Testament as it comes out of the Greek, was not to be a prophet—like Isaiah and Jeremiah—who could tell something in the future. To have the gift of prophecy as Paul is teaching it here was to have the gift to speak forth the Word of God. And it was a necessary gift, because they had no printed New Testament as yet. All these new little groups of believers would have to depend on after Paul left them were gifted men who could literally speak forth the Word of God without benefit of Paul’s written material. That’s why in chapter 13 he says prophecy would cease. Why? Once it got in print and they had Paul’s letters, they no longer needed those gifted men. So when you look at it in verse 15 of II Thessalonians 2, this is exactly why it says what it says.

**II Thessalonians 2:15a**
“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions (things that Paul had taught them or through these gifted men) which ye have been taught, (Now look how Paul divides it.) whether by word, or our epistle.”

So what’s he talking about? Either what you have heard from these gifted men who have been speaking the Word of God these last 18 years in which there was no printed material or whether it was now from Paul’s own written epistles. Now, I do all this just to show you how miraculously the true Church survived. I don’t see how it did, except through the miracle-working power of God. I mean, the odds against it were so tremendous. But still these little groups of believers were able to survive by those two areas.

Gifted men who could speak forth the Word of God following in Paul’s teachings and footsteps, then with his writings as they began to come in about A.D. 58 with the Thessalonian letters. Then in about A.D. 60 come Galatians and Romans on up until he finally brings in the last of his epistles to Timothy and Titus shortly before he’s martyred, probably in about A.D. 66 or 67.
LESSON ONE * PART II

YOU ARE CALLED BY PAUL’S GOSPEL

II Thessalonians 2:14 - 3:18

For those of you who are joining us on television, we just love hearing from you. We appreciate your letters and comments. I guess I can say that mail time is our best time of the day. I would also say, never refrain from writing to us because you can’t include an offering. Naturally we need money to operate. But that’s not just what we look for in our mail. You know, more and more people are writing, “I’m getting addicted to this Book.” Well, my, what better thing to get addicted to.

One old gentlemen who was 72 years old said he had not darkened a church door nor read a word from the Bible since he was 9 years old! He said, “Les, that is 61 years. But I caught your program a few weeks ago, and the Lord has just opened my heart, and now I am addicted to this Book.” Now that’s what you look for. Once you get a taste for the Word and understand how thrilling it is to compare Scripture with Scripture, the Book just comes alive. That’s what we like to hear—that they’re getting into the Book and seeing what the Word of God really says.

All right, we’re just about to finish II Thessalonians. Maybe we’ll make it this half hour. If you will come back with us to II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 16 where Paul writes:

II Thessalonians 2:16

“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,” Now there again is a good indication that God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—even though He’s not specifically mentioned—that is the triune Godhead as Paul calls it. And it is part and parcel of everything pertaining to our spiritual life and our hope for eternity.

He “hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope” (not through works, but rather--) through grace.” Again, I hope that no one will ever misunderstand the Grace of God, the unmerited favor. God didn’t have to do anything for us, but He did because of His Grace.

I always take it all the way back to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were hiding among the trees of the garden and scared to death to meet with God. Do you know what God could have done? He could have zapped them and put them out of His memory. Why didn’t He? His Grace! He pursued and found them and said, “Adam, where art thou?” Now that was Grace. It wasn’t Grace as Paul lays it out. But, nevertheless, as an attribute of God, it was His Grace that didn’t give up on fallen man.

And all the way through human history—the Nation of Israel is the perfect example. My goodness! Didn’t God have every reason in the world to give up on the Nation? Can you imagine Israel offering their little children to the fire god Moloch and casting them alive into that white-hot idol’s arms? Israel! Not some pagan nation. Now God chastised them and got angry
with them, but He didn’t annihilate them. He didn’t wipe them out of His memory. And He told
David in II Samuel chapter 7 that if he sinned, His mercy shall never depart from him. Well,
what’s the other word for mercy? Grace!

And as they succumbed to the golden calf at the foot of Mt. Sinai, after just coming out of
Egypt—my, if you and I—and I know this is probably an absurd way of putting it—had been in
God’s position, what would we have done? We’d have just destroyed them and started over.
But why didn’t He? Grace! Even though they had fallen, again, to such depths of worshipping
an idol such as a golden calf—when He had just brought them out of Egypt and had just brought
them through the Red Sea experience—the fire and the smoke and the thundering that was up
there on the mountaintop. In spite of all that, they still go into the worship of a golden calf.
That’s the Mercy and the Grace of God.

Well, again, the Apostle himself, as I alluded to several programs back, what did it take to save a
man who hated Jesus of Nazareth with a passion and with a religious fervor, and who did
everything he could to stamp out every mention of the name of Jesus of Nazareth? Instead of
putting the man out of commission, what does He do? He saves him! Now that’s the Grace of
God. And I guess every one of us is the same way. We have nothing going for us, so why of a ll
people did God see fit to save you and me? His Grace! And I have to say, even with the
ministry that the Lord has given us. Why give this old lump of clay what He’s given? Not
because of anything I’ve done. Not because of anything Iris has done. But it’s all of
Grace. That unmerited favor of God. Do you see that? So verse 17 then, with this
understanding of the Grace of God.

II Thessalonians 2:17a

“Comfort your hearts,…” Do you realize, going back again to legalism, what a miserable life it
is to live under legalistic demands? Knowing that you can’t satisfy it? Knowing that you can
never measure up? That’s a life of misery. But I don’t have to worry if I measure up. You don’t
have to worry about if you measure up or not. The Grace of God has totally taken care of your
complete spiritual need by your faith in that finished work of the cross. Verse 17:

II Thessalonians 2:17

“Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every (What?) good word and work.” Again, as we
saw a program or two back, after salvation what does God expect? A life of service. A life of
good works. Absolutely! Now let’s go into chapter 3.

II Thessalonians 3:1

“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be
glorified, even as it is with you:”

Now, I’m always bringing up the fact that all of Paul’s ministry was to pagan, idolatrous
Gentiles. There were some Jews. But for the most part, his converts were coming out of abject,
immoral, idol-worshipping Gentiles. And can’t you see, that even to see a half dozen of those
people come to a knowledge of the truth and come out of that darkness of paganism must have thrilled the man to death. He was just as human as we are. And to see the results of God’s saving Grace—I know it just put him on a mountain high. Well, this is what he is saying. Now verse 2:

**II Thessalonians 3:2a**

“And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men:...” Was he delivered? No! Come back to II Corinthians. We’ve got to be reminded of this from time-to-time. Oh, he wasn’t delivered, at least not in the flesh. Of course, whenever I teach II Corinthians especially, I’m always emphasizing how Paul had to defend his apostleship, because those Corinthians were something else.

Always remember, that whatever you take out of the Corinthian letters, they were written to a Church with a ton of problems. They were not an exemplary congregation of believers. They had divisions, they had arguments, they took one another to the Roman courts, and they even had divisions concerning their spiritual mentors. So here Paul is defending his apostleship. Because they even tried to insinuate that he was coming out of nowhere, and why should they listen to someone who had never walked with Jesus as Peter, James, and John had. So as he defends his apostleship, he comes to verse 22 and says—speaking of the Twelve back there in Jerusalem.

**II Corinthians 11:22**

“Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.” Now, all three of those were things that the average Jew was proud of. They were proud of the fact that they were sons of Abraham. They were proud of the fact that they were Israelites indeed and of the Hebrew nation. Now verse 23:

**II Corinthians 11:23a**

“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more;...”

Underline that word more. He says earlier that he’s not one wit behind them. Here he says he’s even more the minister of Christ. And, of course, he was. He had these revelations of this Gospel of Grace that they knew nothing of. You can see in the next part of this verse that his prayer in II Thessalonians was not answered. He was not spared the suffering of the flesh. Look what he records.

**II Corinthians 11:23b-24**

“...in labours more abundant, in stripes (with the whip) above measure, in prisons more frequent, in (near) deaths oft. 24. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.”

I think the Book of Acts only records three, so there must have been two other instances where he was whipped that the Book of Acts doesn’t record. Do you realize that most healthy, strong men could not live through the thirty-nine stripes? I mean it simply tore up their torsos back and
front. On top of that, there were no antibiotics, and those wounds would fester and get infected. But this man went through five of those whippings.

My, by the time they beheaded him in Acts 28, his body must have been just one mass of scar tissue on top of another. But the Lord brought him through it. Now that’s how much he suffered. But, of course, he points out that he didn’t suffer nearly as much as Christ did. That’s not the idea. What he’s showing is that this is what he was willing to do to compensate for those years when he hated the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

**II Corinthians 11:25-27**

“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, (Which brought about his death for a short time up there at Lystra, which he tells about in chapter 12.) thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”

What would the average man have done? Why, the average man would have said, “Nuts to all this, because it’s not worth it.” But the Apostle never said those things. Rather, he continued on because I think his memory was always so sharp on how he had persecuted those followers of Jesus and that Damascus road experience when he heard the Lord Jesus say, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me.” So he couldn’t give up. He had to carry on.

Now we’ve got to quickly go back to II Thessalonians again. So even though he prayed and asked the believers to pray with him that he could be spared these things at the hand of wicked men, he wasn’t. But, you see, it wasn’t that God was callous. It wasn’t that God didn’t hear his plea. What did God tell Paul back there in II Corinthians chapter 12 when he asked that the thorn in the flesh be removed? Our Lord said, “My Grace is sufficient for thee.” And evidently it was. Now the next part of the verse:

**II Thessalonians 3:2b**

“…for all men have not faith.” What’s Paul saying? He’s not always going to be dealing with believers. In fact, the percentage has always been relatively small. So most of the people that Paul dealt with were unbelievers. They were men who had no faith and had no concern about what God said. In fact, they could care less. So he said to remember that not all men have faith. But on the other hand, there’s One that is faithful, and that’s our Lord. He never gives up, and he never abandons us.

**II Thessalonians 3:3**

“But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.” Remember, Paul is writing to people just recently out of paganism. Do you realize that in those Roman cities such as Ephesus, Corinth, Athens, and Rome, evil was everywhere?
Those that were on our Mediterranean cruise a few years ago will remember Pompeii. I was ashamed that I was a part of taking our people into some of those places, but it was part of the tour guide’s agenda. When we got back to the ship, I apologized that my Bible study group had been exposed to that. But they all agreed that this was an enlightenment to see what the Apostle Paul had to put up with everywhere he went. You can’t imagine what it was like.

We think America is bad today. But when comparing, we’re still pretty good, after all. Everywhere Paul went; this gross, wicked, immorality was everywhere. The largest percentage of these people practiced it. And when these believers were brought out of it, it was so thrilling to this Apostle. He could write to them these words of encouragement.

_II Thessalonians 3:4_

“**And we have confidence (never doubting) in the Lord touching you, (keeping hold of you) that ye both do and will do things which we command you.**”

Now that may sound like Paul is going to be a little on the bossy side. But always remember, when Paul commanded, what did he command? Only the things that the Lord laid upon him to command these new believers to practice—which were, again, to abstain from evil and every appearance of evil, to separate yourselves from the world, and have no part in those things.

In fact, that’s a command we should be following today. Let’s go back for a moment to the book of Galatians, so you can see exactly what he’s talking about. Now this is a commandment, if you want to call it that. It’s not a set of ten like the Ten Commandments. But these are the admonitions that came from the pen of the Apostle Paul to these little groups of believers in these various places.

_Galatians 5:16-17a_

“**This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17. For the flesh lusteth (or makes war) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other:**”

So you have warfare between the Spirit side and the flesh. Since that is the case and we’re in a constant warfare, we cannot just flow with the stream. That just won’t work. I always use the analogy. I’ve never done much canoeing. But Iris and I tried it once, and now we think better of it. But I know one thing. If you try to paddle that canoe upstream, the moment you take the paddle out of the water, you go back downstream. The Christian life is the same way. Unless we’re constantly in that battle to go against the stream, the minute you relax, back we go into things that are not spiritual! The Christian life is a constant warfare against everything that’s flowing against us. And it’s not easy. So Paul tells us:

_Galatians 5:17b_

“…so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Because you lose. Oh, not your salvation, but you’ll lose the victory in your Christian life. Now verse 18 and here’s the flipside.
Galatians 5:18

“But if ye be led of the Spirit, (and are controlled by the Spirit) ye are not under the law.” That you have to do this and have to do that. Now verse 19 and these are the things that Paul warns his believers to be against.

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, (Do those sound familiar? It’s your daily paper, isn’t it?) 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.” But now we have another flipside in verse 22. The life of the believer is:

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23. Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Why? There’s no need for a constitutional law against those things of verses 22 and 23, because those things are what make a perfect community. My, we wouldn’t need government codes or a whole library full of law if people could live the fruits of the Spirit, would we? And then over in Timothy, Paul tells us—in fact, let’s just look at it for a moment—I Timothy 1:8.

I Timothy 1:8

“But we know that the law (the Ten) is good, if a man use it lawfully;” In other words, don’t make someone say, “If I keep the Ten Commandments then I can be saved.” No, that’s not using them lawfully. But as a lifestyle it is still God’s program for a good human experience. Now verse 9:

I Timothy 1:9

“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers,”

That’s what the law is for. Look at our own legal system. What are most laws in our state legislature drawn up for? To counteract the people that are breaking the laws that are already on the books. You just think about it. These laws are to keep somebody from taking advantage of, or breaking the law, that’s already on the books. But, you see, to break these laws is man’s nature.

Now coming back to what Paul says in II Thessalonians chapter 3—that when we have these things that Paul commands, it’s not a system that you do this or that if you want to be saved. But rather, here is what God expects of us as blood-bought believers after we’re saved. And I’ll
remind you again; those commands are never like a yoke of bondage. Paul’s commands always begin with “I beseech you.” Such as Romans chapter 12 begins. He also gives us commands such as “yield not, or let not.” Those are words that Paul uses in what he calls his commandments to us as believers.
Ok, it’s good to see everyone in today. We trust that as we study the Scriptures, you’ll be fed from them. For those of you joining us on television, we remind you again that this is an informal Bible study. Many of you write and tell us you feel like you’re right there on the back row. Another thing people comment on is that everybody here has their own Bible and their own notebook. We’re just thrilled with that, because it shows that we’re not here just to be entertained. We’re here to study. We’re here to learn and become skilled in the use of the Word of God. Because after all, that’s why the Lord has left us here. So that we can share these things with others who probably would never be touched by the Word of God if it weren’t for believers out in the work-a-day world.

We’re going to get right into the Book. The other announcements can come at the end of the program. We’re going to start with II Thessalonians today and finish up the book of Thessalonians. Then I’m going to have a little digression for our next half-hour program, so that when we start the next book (the next series of twelve programs), I can start with I Timothy chapter 1 verse 1. I’m trying to sort of time it to that end. But we’re going to finish II Thessalonians first in this half hour. We stopped at chapter 3 and verse 4. So we’re going to go on now to verse 5.

II Thessalonians chapter 3, dropping in at verse 5 where, remember, Paul is writing to these believers up in Thessalonica who had just recently, you might say in a matter of weeks or a month or two, had come out of abject paganism and idolatry. He’s encouraging these believers about, really, the soon return of Christ for the Body of believers. Because you want to remember, it wasn’t until almost the end of Paul’s ministry that he began to realize that the Lord was not going to come in his lifetime. When Paul began his ministry and began to talk about having kept the faith and so forth, he was confident that the Lord was still going to return in his lifetime. These two little letters of Thessalonians really show that. He’s always talking about waiting until the Lord comes.

Because never forget, these people were under intense persecution. Not only from the Roman authorities, but they were under pressure from the Jewish element who felt that this Christianity was just an inroad and was false teaching concerning their ancient religion. So these Thessalonian believers were under a lot of pressure. Consequently, these are the things that Paul writes. So he says in verse 5:
II Thessalonians 3:5a

“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God…” Now stop and think about that a moment. If you’re under a lot of physical pressure and pain and maybe losing your source of income—which, of course, still happens in many areas of the world—it’s pretty hard to relegate that with God’s love, isn’t it?

That would almost seem as if that’s God punishing them. But you see, the whole premise of this is that God never stops loving us, even though the pressures may mount, and it may seem as though God is far from us. Yet Paul wants us to know that the love of God is always with us. It never leaves us even under pressure. I’m going to come back to Romans for just a little bit and look first, before we even finish the verse, at this love of God.

I think one chapter where we can see this the clearest is Romans chapter 5. We can almost spend several minutes right here in this chapter. Then we’ll look at a couple others but Romans chapter 5, and you can almost start at verse 1. And remember now, Paul always writes to the believer. He does not write to the unbelieving world, but only to the child of God. He says in verse 1.

Romans 5:1-2

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2. By whom also we have access by faith (our believing and trusting) into this grace wherein we stand, (that is positionally) and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” And then you come down to verse 5.

Romans 5:5

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because (What?) the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us.” In other words, in spite of all the pressures, in spite of all of the disappointments of life, the Holy Spirit is constantly reminding us that the love of God is still constantly with us. We never have to fear that He’s forgotten us.

You know, whenever I think of the love of God—I can’t help it—I didn’t intend to do this. It’ll probably make me run out of time. But come back with me to John’s Gospel and the account of Lazarus. I hope I can find it. The key to that whole scenario is how the Lord loved Lazarus and his family.

That’d be back in chapter 11. I was looking too far ahead. John’s Gospel chapter 11 and you all know the story of Lazarus. How the Lord had been out of town for those
three or four days and gets word that Lazarus is dead. All right, in John’s Gospel chapter 11 dropping down to verse 3 and assuming that my listening audience knows the story of Lazarus.

**John 11:3**

“Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou (What’s the word? Lovest.) behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.” Now come down to verse 5.

**John 11:5**

“Now Jesus (What’s the next word?) loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.” He had a love for those three people that was so evident everybody knew it.

Now come all the way down through that chapter. He has now come back to Bethany, and He is about to raise Lazarus from the dead. Come down to verse 35. Most people know it as the shortest verse in the Bible.

**John 11:35-36**

“Jesus wept. (Because of the circumstances. Then verse 36, here it is again.) Then said the Jews, Behold how he (What?) loved him!” Now isn’t that beautiful? Here were three people, probably typical of the ordinary Jewish people at that time, nothing extra about them. Yet everybody understood how Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus. I never can forget that chapter when I think of the love of Christ.

All right, now come back to Romans chapter 5, Honey, and come down to verse 8. Verse 8 and this is the love of God that Paul is constantly referring to, even back in the Thessalonian letter.

**Romans 5:8**

“But God commendeth his love (This whole concept of the love of God just keeps coming up constantly.) God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet (What?) sinners, Christ died for us.” This is something that the world can’t understand—that God could love His worst enemy.

And, of course, that was epitomized at the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus. Oh, how Saul hated the name Jesus of Nazareth, religiously. Just detested it and couldn’t work hard enough or fast enough to stamp out any memory of Jesus of
Nazareth. And instead of turning His wrath on the man, God showed him His love and saved him by His Grace.

Well, I’m going to bring you on over to Romans chapter 8. Again, even though the word itself may not be shown so clearly, yet it is so evident that it’s the love of God that keeps us, that protects us, and that is a constant comfort in our everyday experience. Okay, let’s drop into Romans 8 and all the way down to verse 35. Verses that I usually write right back to people when they question me on my stand on eternal security.

You know, the first thing I always say for a person that’s a true believer—yes, he’s secure. Look what these verses say. And it’s all based on God’s love for us—not only while we were yet sinners, but now even as believers. So consequently--

Romans 8:35

“Who shall separate us from (What?) the love of Christ? (It is such a binding love that there is no way that anything can take this from us.) shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Now see, the Thessalonians knew all those. But the love of Christ never left them. And they understood that. That’s why Paul commended them. And then verse 37:

Romans 8:37

“Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors though him that loved us.” This is the whole concept of our Christian experience. It is that God loved us as sinners. He loves us even more as His blood-bought children. So Paul could go on to say:

Romans 8:38-39

“For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (Nothing! Nothing!) 39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from (What again?) the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Nothing can separate us from the love of God! Now that’s just a sampling, you see. That’s not exhausting references concerning the love of God. It’s just a sampling, but this is what Paul is referring to. Now, if you’ll come back with me again—back to II Thessalonians chapter 3.
He was just reminding us that even though we may come under pressure, which we in America as yet know nothing of. We know nothing of what it is to come under the pressures of persecution for being believers. The day may come. We hope not. But anything is possible. But these Thessalonians knew what it was, so he says:

**II Thessalonians 3:5**

“*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,* (That saved them out of idolatry and is keeping them even through the pressures of everyday life.) *and into the patient waiting for Christ.*” Now there comes Paul’s concept that the Lord was coming again at any moment. He thought it’d be in his lifetime.

Now, of course, for 1,900 and some years the church has been in that waiting mode. The church over the centuries has been waiting for what we call the imminent return of Christ. Now of course, we are far closer than what they were 100 years ago. We’re far, far closer than they were 200 years ago. But it’s that same concept. We are to be waiting expectantly for the return of Christ to take us unto Himself.

**II Thessalonians 3:5b**

“...and (let that love direct you) *into the patient waiting for Christ.*” All right, back up a few pages to I Thessalonians chapter 1. You remember when we first started the study on the Thessalonian letters, I was constantly emphasizing that the Apostle had only spent three weeks with these new believers fresh out of paganism. He writes the letter probably within a month or two after he had left them. I think he probably wrote within a month or six-weeks after having won these Thessalonians to the Lord. Now look what he writes in Thessalonians 1, dropping down to verse 9.

**I Thessalonians 1:9a**

“For they themselves (That is, these other believes in the other parts of Greece.) *show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you,...*”

In other words, they accepted the man and his message. You know, we were looking—in our class last night here in Oklahoma—back in Israel’s history when the prophets would come to the Nation and convict them of their sin and their wickedness. Did they do like the Thessalonian pagans? No. They turned on the prophets, and they killed one after another. And Jeremiah, of course, as I’ve always pointed out—the Babylonians found him in a dank dungeon. Why? Because the Jewish people didn’t like the message. But see, these Thessalonian pagans didn’t respond that way. When the Apostle Paul came to their city, they had a tremendous reception of the man and his message.
**I Thessalonians 1:9b**

“…what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;” Then as soon as they became believers, what were they expectantly looking for? Christ’s return. So what did he say?

**I Thessalonians 1:10**

“And (you knew) to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.” Now there’s another indication that Paul teaches that believers will not go into the Tribulation period, which is, of course, the Wrath of God.

So there is this constant concept throughout Paul’s epistles to not only recognize our salvation and not only our position in Christ. Not that we’re to sit on some mountaintop and look for things to happen, but the subconscious—I think in the subconscious we should be constantly aware that maybe today, or maybe tomorrow, the Lord will come! And it doesn’t have to take us over to the place where we quit working.

You know, I’ve always told people here in Tulsa. There are things that I suppose that we should do and could do and sometimes we put it off because we feel we’re so close to the Lord’s coming. I remember a year or so ago a gentleman called from Pennsylvania. He said, “Les, I was just ready to plant some apple trees, and I thought, why? What’s the use?” Well, I told him to go ahead and plant them. I said, “Even though we trust the Lord will come before they ever bear fruit the first time, yet we don’t know. So go ahead and plant those trees, and maybe the next generation will still be here. We don’t know.”

But, nevertheless, the whole concept of Paul is that as soon as we become a believer, we not only serve Him as he said up in verse 9, but we have that expectancy that He will be coming at any moment. Now, another one I always like to refer to in that same light is back in Titus. The little letter to Titus behind I and II Timothy and we come to Titus chapter 2. And I always like to start in this series in verse 11, but verse 13 will be our key verse.

**Titus 2:11-12**

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (Now, not all are believers, but they’ve all heard.) 12. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (or desires), we should live (day by day, now) soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”
You know, I’ve used the expression so often. We’re not to be so heavenly-minded we’re no earthly good. That’s not what God wants. But on the other hand, we are to live godly and soberly in this present world wherever we might be. And then verse 13, this is what we’re to be doing along with everything else. Along with our service. Along with our occupation. Along with our profession, whatever it may be. We are to be:

*Titus 2:13*

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;” Now, if you’ll look up that Greek word for appearing, it’s the same Greek word that spoke of His first advent when He came to the Nation of Israel. Now how did He come? In some invisible spirit realm? No! He came bodily. And it’s that same Greek word that speaks of His appearing. It’s going to be a physical, visible manifestation of the Christ. And this is what we’re to be looking for. And you know, I’m always going back to Acts chapter 1, where the angels told Peter, James, and John and the rest of them:

*Acts 1:11b*

“...why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, (That’s been walking with you, that’s been eating with you, and as they saw Him go.) which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

All right, so Paul uses that same concept back here in II Thessalonians chapter 3. That not only are we to delve ourselves into the love of God, realizing all that it does for us, but we are to be constantly expecting His return. We’re to be ready at any moment.

All right, now in the few moments we have left, I’m going to move on to the last part of this chapter; which seems kind of odd, I suppose, to the casual reader. But we’re going to see that this is one of the things that Paul taught even back in the Corinthian letters. All right, verse 6, now he says:

*II Thessalonians 3:6a*

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly,...” In other words, we’re not supposed to just wink at it and laugh at it and think, oh, boy, somebody is really goofing up. No, that’s not what we’re to do. We’re to seriously withdraw our fellowship from those kinds of believers. And he is talking about believers now.
II Thessalonians 3:6b

“...withdraw yourself from every brother (a believer) that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” Or the things that Paul had taught for believers to do.

II Thessalonians 3:7-8a

“For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: (There’s that other one where Paul says that we’re to be followers of him as he follows Christ. Because, after all, he is human. He has the same hang-ups and the same passions that we do. So he is the one that the Scripture admonishes us to follow.) for (He says we can follow him because--) we (he) behaved not ourselves (himself) disorderly among you; (In other words, I suppose I can put it back into the King James where he says--) 8. Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nothing;...”

Now, isn’t it amazing? The Apostle Paul was so careful to never let anybody accuse him of taking advantage of a situation or sponging off of anybody. So rather than take a free meal—or rather than take a salary, as we’d say today—he worked for his own wages. He provided for himself. Not that it’s contrary to Scripture, because he teaches it in the pastoral letters—that the servant of God is worthy of his hire.

So, yes, pastors are due their salaries and so forth. But the Apostle wouldn’t do it, because he didn’t want anybody to ever say—since Christianity was just getting off the ground. See, it wouldn’t take much to beat it down. So lest there be any opposition using some of the things that they thought he shouldn’t do, he said, I won’t do it. So he would never take anything for nothing. He wouldn’t even take a free meal. He said, we have never, never been chargeable to any of you. Now verse 9:

II Thessalonians 3:9a

“Not because we have not power,...” It wasn’t because he didn’t have the power, because he did. As God’s servant, as the Apostle, he could have demanded it of them. He could have said, provide my needs. But he never did, so that no one could ever accuse him of using his office for his own personal advantage. Quite a cry from what we see today, isn’t it? All right, now verse 10:

II Thessalonians 3:10

“For even when we were with you, (those two or three weeks) this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” Quite a statement, isn’t it? That just flies in the face of socialism and communism, where those so-called political
ideas figure that you can take it from one and give it to the other. That is never a biblical concept. Paul says if you don’t work, you shouldn’t eat.

Now naturally, he wasn’t talking about those who were incapable of working. We’re going to see, when we get into our study of the letters to Timothy, that he makes special provision for widows—because in that culture, there was no way for a widow to garner an income. So the local congregations were admonished by the Apostle to take care of widows, or for those who are incapable of providing for themselves.

But what he’s talking about here is able-bodied men who could be out there making their own living and providing for their own. He says, if they don’t want to work, then they shouldn’t eat. And I agree with it 100%. If someone is able to work, I think they should be working. If they can’t work, yeah, then someone has to provide. But now turn the page a little bit, Honey, over to I Timothy, I think it is. I Timothy chapter 5 and this all fits with Paul’s admonition to believers not to be shirkers. Not to be freeloaders. We are to work. And that’s the way God has always intended it.

I Timothy 5:8

“But (he says) if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” Quite a statement, isn’t it? So what does that tell believers? You provide for your own family. You work. And you don’t wait for someone else to do it for you.

Now we’ll come back to II Thessalonians and finish up the chapter in the minute we have left. Then we can be ready for the Timothys after our next half hour. Back to II Thessalonians chapter 3. He continues on and says:

II Thessalonians 3:11

“For we hear (even amongst that little small group of believers up in Thessalonica) that there are some who walk among you disorderly, not working at all, but are busybodies.”

In other words, they were not working for any kind of an income. They were simply circulating through that little group of believers trying to see how they could sponge off of someone else. And, oh, how Paul condemns that.
Again, we always like to let our audience know that we’re not associated with any group, and we’re not underwritten. In fact, I want to emphasize that. I just had a call last night that said, well, now do these various cities have somebody that underwrites you? No. We do not. We depend totally on the free-will offerings of God’s people. We can only go as far as we have funds available. We’re here to teach the Word with no ax to grind. Hopefully, I never attack anybody or any group. We’re just going to see what the Bible says. Now at the end of the program, you’ll notice that we do have various things that are available for study helps and so forth.

All right, now my lesson today is not in line with our going through the Bible. We just finished the Thessalonian letters, and I wanted to fill in this half hour—before we start the letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon—with some questions that come in constantly. I put it in my newsletter that will be coming out in the next week or two, but I know that only a small, small percentage of our audience gets the newsletter. So I decided to use this half hour to point out the false teaching that is inundating people concerning three things. Two primarily, but these three things that I’ve got on the board that were all introduced way back in the Book of Genesis before the Mosaic Law ever began.

These are some of the arguments that people will give me. Well, we must keep the seventh day Sabbath, because it was already in vogue before Abraham. We have to tithe, because it was already practiced back with Abraham. I’m just going to show that all of these things that we’ve got here on the board—the seventh day Sabbath, tithing, and circumcision—were all introduced way back in the Book of Genesis. But then they all three became part of the Mosaic Law. So that when Paul writes in Romans 6—you’re not under the Law, you’re under Grace—it follows that these three, as well as all the rest of the Mosaic system disappeared. They’re no longer valid.

All right, so we’re going to use the Scriptures. We’re not just going to use what Les Feldick thinks. We’re going to use the Scriptures. Let’s start in Genesis chapter 2 verse 1 and particularly verse 2.

**Genesis 2:1-3a**
“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2. And on the seventh day (That’s our Saturday.) God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it (That is the seventh day.) he had rested…”

Now there’s not a word there about worship. It all indicates a lack of labor. Okay, that’s where the seventh day Sabbath was first introduced in Scripture—when God Himself rested from the six days of creation.

All right, now the next one we’re going to look at from the Old Testament, before even the Law, was this whole idea of tithing. This, of course, was introduced when Abraham had defeated the over-runners of Lot and the fellows at Sodom. We’ll come all the way up to Genesis 14 for this one. Genesis 14, and, oh, for sake of time, I can’t read all of these I’d like to. I’m going to come down to—boy, I can’t find the verse that I want! Okay, verse 20, there it is.

**Genesis 14:20-22**

“And blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him (That is Abram gave to God.) tithes of all. (That is of all the spoil.) 21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. 22. But Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23. That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:”

But he did give the tithes of that spoil to God. So here we have the concept of tithing, or the ten percent as people like to look at it, way back here before the Law was ever introduced. All right, now the third thing—it doesn’t affect us so much in our western culture, but nevertheless, I’m going to use it. Because it is part of these things that were introduced back here to Abraham and that were all funneled into the Mosaic Law. The seventh day Sabbath, tithing, and circumcision all became part of the Mosaic Law. All right, the next one I want to show you is circumcision. It’s the first time it’s introduced. That would be in chapter 17.

**Genesis 17:10**

“This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; (This is God speaking to Abraham.) Every man child among you shall be circumcised.” Now verse 12:
Genesis 17:12a

“And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations,...” Now verse 14:

Genesis 17:14

“And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.” Circumcision, then, became the covenant sign between Israel and Jehovah. All right, now what I want to do is show how all three of these concepts—the Sabbath and tithing and circumcision—were picked up by the Mosaic Law as we go on into Israel’s history.

Now turn with me up to Exodus. We’re going to take them in this order as we’ve got them on the board. Because that’s the way they came in Genesis. Now in Exodus 16, the Law still hasn’t been given. That doesn’t happen until chapter 20. But God has just begun showering the manna on the children of Israel as they go into the wilderness. So here is where God is going to begin the concept of the seventh day of rest, as He Himself had practiced it back in Genesis. All right, now look what it says in Exodus 16, after they have been receiving the manna. Verse 23:

Exodus 16:23

“And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake today, (That was on Friday.) and seethe (or boil) that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.” The Sabbath day, Saturday, and so verse 25:

Exodus 16:25-26

“And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a sabbath (a day of rest) unto the LORD: today ye shall not find it in the field. 26. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.”

All right, the Law hasn’t been given yet. But it was something that God incorporated. Because now Israel was beginning to labor to pick up the manna. All right, when you get into chapter 20—turn over to that in Exodus. Here you’ll find that the seventh day Sabbath becomes part of the Ten Commandments. It becomes part of the Mosaic Law. Exodus chapter 20 verse 8 and it’s the same concept that He just gave them in chapter 16.
Exodus 20:8-10a

“Remember the sabbath day, (the seventh day) to keep it holy. 9. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath (or the rest day) of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter,...” and so on and so forth. It’s that constant reminder that God instituted the seventh day of rest back there in Genesis chapter 2.

So here we see, then, that the seventh day Sabbath was introduced way back at creation. It was repeated to the Nation of Israel when they started picking up the manna. And then just a few weeks later, it became part of the Ten Commandments.

All right, now let’s do the same thing with tithing. We’ve already seen that Abraham tithed of the spoil that he got from defeating the kings that had overrun Sodom and Gomorrah. All right, now let’s see where it picks up in the Law. Leviticus, and, oh goodness, if people would just do a word-study of tithing, they wouldn’t have so much difficult. Because it’s totally different than what most churches are practicing today.

Leviticus 27:30-31

“And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S: it is holy unto the LORD. 31. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.” In other words, if a gentleman wanted to take cash to the Temple instead of grain or sheep or something like that, he would have to pay a 20% penalty. If he wanted to turn it into what today we would call cash. Now verse 32:

Leviticus 27:32

“And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.” In other words, if they would count their sheep coming out of the fold, that’s what it meant to go under the rod. They would have the counting rod over the gate, and as the sheep went by the rod, they could count. All right, now out of those sheep, or whatever it was that went under the rod, they were to keep count. And one out of every ten was given to the Levites.

Now the purpose of the tithe was that the Levites did not own any of the property. They had no income. So God provided for the Levite tribe, the priests’ tribe, with the tithes of the other tribes. So the tithe is not biblical, unless it is given to the Levites. I
wish people could understand that. The tithe was that which was given to support the Levites. All right, now verse 34:

**Leviticus 27:34a**

*These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel…* So tithing is not, now, just something that came from Abraham. It is now part of the Law.

Now, I’m going to show a couple more verses. We’re going to have to go real fast on these, or I’m going to run out of time. II Chronicles chapter 31 verse 5. II Chronicles—that’s right after the Kings—II Chronicles 31 verse 5. II Chronicles 31—in fact, I’m going to look at verse 4. Start at verse 4, Honey.

**II Chronicles 31:4**

*Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the (Who?) Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.* This is law. Even though it is not in the Ten Commandments, that doesn’t mean it’s not law. Now when you come down to verse 6:

**II Chronicles 31:5-6a**

*And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. 6. And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep,…* One out of every ten that went under the rod. See that? You know what that meant? If somebody had 19 sheep, how many did he give? One. He didn’t kill one and give him nine parts of it. He took one out of ten. And until he hit 20, he gave one. Then he gave two.

That was the true tithe. It was one out of ten animals, and it went to the Levites. All right, now let’s go over a little further in history to Nehemiah.

**Nehemiah 10:34**

*And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, (Those are the people who would need the help from the other tribes.) and the people, for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the (What?) law:* That’s what I want people to see. This was according to the
Law. Not just the Ten Commandments, but the Law. Now under that same line of thinking then, verse 37:

**Nehemiah 10:37**

“And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto (What people?) the Levites, (They were the ones to accept the tithes.) *that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.*”

All right, then the last one that everybody likes to use to put their people under the pressure of tithing is Malachi. And you’ve all heard this one. My, you know they love to use this to pressure their people to bring ten percent of their income. Well, that’s not what the tithe was. The tithe was one out of ten of the grain or the sheep. And it was only for the Levites who were the priestly tribe. All right, Malachi 3—drop down to verse 8. These are the verses that I know a lot of people like to use.

**Malachi 3:8**

*“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”* In other words, they weren’t bringing that one out of ten to the Levites. They weren’t keeping up what God had demanded of them. So consequently, verse 10:

**Malachi 3:10**

*“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house,...”* They were to bring all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my own house. Well, who in the world served in the house of the Lord in Israel? The priests. The Levites. And that was the purpose of the tithing; because they had no flocks. They had no land. They had no orchards. They had to depend on the tithes of the people.

Now on top of the tithes, there were also offerings that were other than the tithe. And that came from their various other commodities—their fruits and vegetables and so forth. All right, now that pretty much covers the fact that tithing and the seventh day Sabbath and circumcision all went into the Law.

Now, to show you that circumcision was practiced all the way up to the time of Christ, as you well know, but I still want to show it from Scripture. Come all the way up with me to Luke chapter 1. Because I have to establish, now, that all three of these
concepts—the seventh day Sabbath, the tithing, and circumcision—all funneled down into the Mosaic Law. And the Mosaic Law was in force when Christ began His ministry. You’ve heard me say that over and over. Everything that Jesus said or taught was under the Law. He never went contrary to the Law of Moses. All right, in Luke’s Gospel chapter 1, we’ve got John the Baptist, verse 59.

Luke 1:59

“And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.” All right, when you come across the page to Luke chapter 2, we have Jesus in full accordance with the Mosaic Law in verse 21.

Luke 2:21

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”

All right, then further up into our New Testament—come all the way up to Philippians—all the way up to Philippians chapter 3. And here we see Paul reminding us of his Jewish background—being born and raised and educated under the Law. All right, in Philippians chapter 3, might as well start at verse 4, Honey.

Philippians 3:4-5

“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: (And here’s why.) 5. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;”

Circumcised? Absolutely! According to what? The Law. According to the Law. Now then, in the few moments we have left; let’s see how all three of these disappear when Paul says that we’re no longer under the Law. We are now under Grace. And Grace is that total freedom from the Law. Now, if people are comfortable with not practicing circumcision, and I think 99% are, how can they drop one and hang on to two?

I mean, I just can’t reconcile this with Scripture. I always say the same thing in Acts chapter 2. How in the world can people hang on to the things in chapter 2, but not have a thing to do with their bringing all things to the common place and living off the kitty? They won’t do that. But Acts chapter 2 teaches it. Well, there again, I tell
people—how can you take part of a chapter and say, yeah, this is for me, but I won’t touch this. Well, it’s the same way here. If you don’t think circumcision is appropriate because we’re no longer under Law, then neither are these. That’s my argument.

Okay, now let’s look. What’s the first one? The seventh day Sabbath—I Corinthians chapter 16. All got it? Here Paul writes:

\textit{I Corinthians 16:1-2a}

“\textit{Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2. Upon the first day of the week} (Which today we call Sunday, not because it’s a pagan day of the sun. It’s just simply because, historically, it has been named Sunday. Has nothing scriptural, anti-scriptural about it. It’s the first day of the week.) \textit{let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,…}”

Now I can also use that verse for the next segment, for tithing. They were to bring their offerings, not their tithe. They were to bring their offerings on the first day of the week, not the Sabbath—a total departure there in just one verse. Well, I was going to take you back to another one in the Book of Acts. Back to Acts chapter 20, Honey, and this is how the early church practiced it. And there’s no denying it—Acts chapter 20 verses 6 and 7. This, of course, is back during Paul’s ministry. All got it? Now he says:

\textit{Acts 20:6-7}

\textit{“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas} (That is over there on the western Turkish coast.) \textit{in five days; where we abode seven days. 7. And upon the first day of the week,} (See?) \textit{when the disciples came together to break bread,} (Fellowship, see? And worship.) \textit{Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow;} (which would be Monday) \textit{and continued his speech until midnight.”}

All right, now let’s see—Colossians chapter 2. Boy, I’m going to be running right up against the end. Colossians chapter 2 starting at verse 14. Now, I’m still showing how that first and foremost the seventh day Sabbath is not for us, because it became part of the Law. We’re not under Law. We’re under Grace. All right, look what he says in verse 14.

\textit{Colossians 2:14-15}
“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, (That’s the whole system of Law,) and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it.” Now then verse 16, here it comes plain as day.

Colossians 2:16

“Let no man therefore judge you in food, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the (What days?) sabbath days;” Paul said, don’t let anybody confuse you and try to put you back under the Law that was crucified with Christ.

All right, then our last one again—circumcision. That, of course, is so obvious when you come back to Galatians chapter 5. Galatians chapter 5, so that all three of these concepts which went into the Law, have now been abrogated by Paul’s declaring us not under Law but under Grace.

Galatians 5:1-2

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty (What does liberty imply? Not under Law) wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (Now here it comes, and where we’re going to be able to close.) 2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, (According to the Law—if you’re going to practice circumcision according to the Law as part of your salvation.) Christ (the crucified, risen) shall profit you (How much?) nothing.” Circumcision went away with the Law.
Okay, good to see everyone in today. We always make a special welcome to folks who have never been here before. For those of you joining us on television, I always try to make it understood that we’re non denominational and not associated with anyone. We just hopefully teach the Word in such a way that anyone and everyone can read it and understand it.

Of course, nothing thrills us more than when you write to that effect—that for the first time in your life you’re enjoying your Bible. We get so many letters that will say something to this effect: what used to be covered with dust, now we’re wearing it out. Of course, that’s what we feel the Bible should be. It should be just worn out. Periodically, we should have to go and get a new one.

So anyway, we’re glad you’ve joined us. We’re going to be looking at Paul’s letters to Timothy. We’ll be starting at chapter 1 verse 1. And we always like to give a little backdrop whenever we start a new book or letter. Remember, those earlier epistles that we normally refer to as the prison epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon—were written during an imprisonment that evidently Paul overcame by gaining an acquittal by using his own expertise as an attorney himself. And during the time of his freedom, he writes I Timothy and Titus.

And notice that both of those are almost alike, because they are both for the same purpose. Timothy, of course, is being put in charge of those in the area of Ephesus in Asia Minor; whereas Paul writes to Titus with the idea of caring for the little churches on the island of Crete.

So understand that these are not prison epistles, per se. But they are in-between that time between his first and second imprisonment. Then when he is arrested the second time, maybe a year or two later, he is in prison and awaiting his martyrdom. At that time he will write II Timothy. So as we study II Timothy, it will be in that light—that he now knows his time is at an end, and he realizes now that the Lord is not going to come in his lifetime.

I trust you all realize that throughout Paul’s ministry he honestly thought the Lord would be coming for the Church during his lifetime. And he spoke in that regard all the way through. Now of course, by the time he gets to his second imprisonment, he no longer makes that kind of a statement. Again, remember that Timothy and Titus are going to be written to mostly pastors or church leaders—because, after all, there is no hierarchy involved in Paul’s earliest congregations. There still had to be someone in charge of maintaining order. As we will see here in our programs today, the admonition is to constantly be on guard against false teaching.

Now don’t think for a minute that false teaching is something that has come up in our lifetime. Christianity has been up against it from day one. And consequently, then, that is his admonition to not be deceived. Be not deceived, beguiled, and beware. Those are the kinds of words that you see throughout Paul’s epistles.
We’re going to start now with I Timothy chapter 1. Remembering, now, Paul has just recently been released from his first imprisonment. He is now writing to his son in the faith, Timothy. All right, verse 1 of I Timothy chapter 1:

I Timothy 1:1

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;” Now, of course, here again, it is so plain that his apostleship was a direct command of the Lord Jesus Christ. I was reading a book about Paul just the other night. And that how, even during his lifetime, so many of the early church people—even some that had been his converts—were constantly doubting or casting a bad light on his apostleship.

And if you remember when we taught the Corinthian letters, I pointed out constantly how he had to defend his apostleship. In fact, one of the ladies here told me awhile back that “Yes, Paul had to defend his apostleship, and you defend Paul, and we defend you.” So I guess that’s about what it boils down to. Because you see, the vast majority of Christendom still puts Paul off to the side. They’d rather not have anything to do with him. And yet we’re going to show that just on this verse alone, Paul’s apostleship is mandatory for our salvation and our Christian walk, as well as our hope for the end of the Church Age.

We’re seeing more and more – in fact somebody just sent me a book by Tim LaHaye, one of the authors of the Left Behind series. And his whole premise in this last book someone just sent me—I don’t know when it was published—was just what I’ve been telling my classes. Never have I seen such an attack on the pre-tribulation rapture as we’re seeing lately. And again, it’s always because they will not look at the authority of the Apostle Paul. So, Paul is an apostle by the commandment of our Lord and Savior.

Now we might as well chase it down in Scripture. Go back with me, if you will, to Acts chapter 9—which, of course, is the account of his conversion on the road to Damascus. We’re not going to cover all of that, because most of you understand how he was a (What’s the right word?) bona fide Jewish zealot. He just lived and breathed religion. And he thought that anybody that had embraced Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel was a heretic and had to be removed from Israel. That’s what his persecution was attempting to do.

Boy, you talk about ethnic cleansing. Old Saul of Tarsus had one of his own. He thought he could literally cleanse Israel of anything that smacked of Jesus of Nazareth. So now he’s on the road to Damascus. And the sole purpose is to arrest Jews up there in Syria who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah; although they were still, of course, in Judaism. His whole purpose was to go and arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem. Hopefully they would be sentenced and be put to death.

All right, now as he goes, of course, the Lord meets him. You know the account. How He struck him. How the light blinded him. And Paul’s response was, “Lord, what would you have me to do?” All right, now I’m going to bring you all the way down, for sake of time, to verse 11. Where the Lord not only deals with Saul of Tarsus out on the highway leading to Damascus, but
also leap-frogs into the city itself to deal with one of the Jews who had become a believer of Jesus of Nazareth, or what we call the Kingdom Gospel. Here it is in verse 11.

Acts 9:11

“And the Lord said unto him, (Ananias) Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire 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.” Now verse 13 says it all. Ananias knew all about this guy.

Acts 9:13-14

“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 kings, and the children of Israel: (Now that’s the Lord Himself speaking as to why He has this Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.) 16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”

Now those of you who have been with us all the way through Paul’s Epistles, you understand how the man did indeed suffer over and over and over. I’m sure the only thing that kept him going was remembering how he had persecuted those before him. We know it’s just part and parcel of Paul’s apostleship.

Let’s go on to Acts chapter 22 for a moment. Now Paul rehearses that same conversion experience, but in the first person. Now in chapter 9, of course, it’s telling the account of it. But in chapter 22, we have Paul coming back to Jerusalem after having been out in his ministry amongst the Gentiles for several years. This is where I want to show how it must have just struck the apostle to the heart that he was going to have to go to the Gentiles, because he was a good Jew. He was a religious fanatic. And then to be told that he was going to go to the Gentiles!

Now the parallel of that is Jonah. Now a lot of people don’t realize that Jonah would rather walk the plank than go to Nineveh. Why? Because Jews had nothing to do with those pagan Gentiles. They had no concept that the God of Abraham would ever have time for those Gentile dogs, as they called them. This man’s perception was no different, and now he has to go to those Gentiles. So all of this comes in on the man, plus the fact that now he’s going to have to suffer inexorably for it.
So in Acts 22 he has been rehearsing his conversion up there in verses 1-16. But now I want to use the coming verses to show the mentality, or the attitude, of the Jewish people towards Gentiles. Now here he is. He’s the Apostle to the Gentiles. He’s been out now for several years. He comes back to Jerusalem, and he addresses this Jewish multitude. Now verse 17, as he addresses this Jewish crowd in Jerusalem, this is what he says.

**Acts 22:17-18**

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18. And saw him (That is Jesus of Nazareth.) saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they (the Jews) will not receive thy testimony concerning me.” Now Paul comes back to the first person, and he says:

**Acts 22:19-21**

“And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20. And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. 21. And he (the Lord Jesus from Glory) said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”

Now the next verse is what I want you to see. The next verse shows the attitude of the ordinary, everyday, commonplace Jew. These were the people, of course, that thought just like Saul of Tarsus had before his conversion. Verse 22:

**Acts 22:22**

“And they (his Jewish audience) gave him audience (or listened to him) unto this word, (the word “Gentile”) and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.”

Now, that was the mentality of the Jewish populace at the time of Saul’s conversion. And his mentality was no different. Yet, of course, because of his persecution, he now suffered and suffered for the sake of the Gospel as it was going out to the Gentile world.

All right, now I can take you back to another account of how Paul had to deal with the people of his own race. I want to bring you back to Acts chapter 15. And over and over, when I teach this chapter in areas where we’ve never taught before, and if people have never heard me teach, when we show them these verses in Acts 15, they’ll come up, sometimes half a dozen at a time, and their statement is, “I never knew this was in the Bible.”

But this is what Paul is up against. All these little congregations were probably a lot like our home Bible studies. They weren’t huge congregations. They met in homes. And as soon as he would get a little group established, he would move on. I mean, he had a lot of territory to cover. And as soon as he would leave, this is what would happen. All right, let’s read it, verse 1 of Acts 15.
Acts 15:1a

“And certain men which came down from Judaea (that’s Jerusalem) taught the brethren,…” They would come in and seemingly have the knowledge and the authority. They would actually usurp the position of teaching. So they would teach these Gentile believers of Paul’s preaching, and this is what they said.

Acts 15:1b

“…Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.” Quite a statement, wasn’t it? That’s what they were teaching. Oh, now Paul’s gospel is alright as far as it goes, but that’s not enough. You have to be circumcised!

Now, the reason I go all the way to verse 5, is because I once read a commentary where he said it really wasn’t that big a deal, because, after all, the Jews knew that they couldn’t force circumcision on the Gentiles. He kind of pooh-poohed the idea. But it didn’t stop with circumcision. You go up to verse 5. They didn’t stop there. Look what it says in verse 5 of chapter 15.

Acts 15:5a

“But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed,…” In other words, these were the religious Pharisees of Israel who embraced Jesus of Nazareth. They were believers, but they knew nothing of Paul’s Gospel of Grace. So consequently, what did they say?

Acts 15:5b

“…saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them (To do what?) to keep the law of Moses.” Well, that just flew in the face of everything that Paul said. Because what did Paul start out with? “You’re not under Law, you’re under Grace!”

And yet these people were saying, well, the one alone isn’t enough. You’ve got to have both. All right, let’s see how Paul deals with that. Let’s go to Galatians chapter 2. No, I want to start with chapter 1. Galatians chapter 1 and this is exactly what Paul is dealing with—where these false teachers would come into his little groups of believers up there, especially in Asia Minor, which is now Turkey, and tell them that Paul’s gospel alone wasn’t enough. They had to practice circumcision and keep the Mosaic Law. Now look what he says about it.

Galatians 1:6-7a

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7. Which is not another; (In other words, it’s not totally different, but it was so subtly adulterated. They’re not coming at you with something totally different.) but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert…” Now you know that Paul is constantly warning us of any kind of perversion of his Gospel. Here’s the clearest one. They were not just simply throwing Paul’s Gospel to the wind and saying, don’t have anything to do with that. But they
were leaving that set and then coming in and adding to it—Law-keeping, circumcision, and so forth—which, of course, made it a perversion.

In fact, remember when I taught Corinthians, Paul used the example that he did not come with an adulterated, perverted product. And I showed you from the language of the Greek, that it was when they took wine and watered it down and sold it for the real thing? Well, that was a perversion. That wine was adulterated. Well, that’s what they were doing with Paul’s Gospel. They weren’t throwing it out, they were perverting it. And listen, we’re up against the very same thing today. They are adding everything to Paul’s Gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4—how that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.

I’ll go on a little further here in Galatians chapter 2, because I want you to understand that when Paul speaks of his gospel as having been by way of the commandment of the Lord Jesus, it is indeed different than anything even Israel had ever heard before. Now in Galatians chapter 2 verse 2 and this is 14 years after his conversion, so he’s already been out there amongst the Gentile world for 10 or 12 years. Now he’s been brought back to Jerusalem. This is the same meeting that we just looked at in Acts 15. He says in verse 2:

**Galatians 2:2a**

*And I went up by revelation,…* In other words, he didn’t go up because he had an idea it was time to go to Jerusalem. He didn’t go to Jerusalem because the Antioch Church thought he should. The Lord instructed him. The Lord no doubt laid upon him and said, now, Paul, it’s time you go and meet with the leadership up there in Jerusalem. So he says.

**Galatians 2:2a**

*And I went up by revelation, and communicated…* Now, I always stop at that word, don’t I? Because communicated means he made sure they understood what he was saying.

Now, I think we’ve all experienced times when we have told somebody something and they missed it completely. Well, when you communicate, you don’t miss it. You make certain that they understand what you’re saying. This is what Paul is saying. When he went up to Jerusalem, he made certain that Peter, James, John, and the rest of the leadership understood where he was coming from. Now look what he says.

**Galatians 2:2b**

*…and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,…* Now, you see, when you come on further in this chapter, it clarifies that indeed. There were two messages. One for Peter and the Eleven and the Jews of that day to believe, and one for the Gentiles that was revealed to Paul in this Age of Grace—which is totally different. Today, everyone must believe Paul’s Gospel of Grace. Now I know this throws a curve at people. Oh, they can get so riled up.
I remember one young man out east someplace. I’d already been teaching for nearly two hours. Started at 7 and it was about quarter to 9, and, my, he was getting exercised. He was trying to interrupt me, and, finally, I just had to tell him to be quiet, and I would talk to him when I was through.

So I went back afterwards, and he says, “Where to you get this TWO gospel bit? There has never been more than one.” And I said, “Now wait a minute. Do you mean to tell me that Adam and Eve were saved by believing that Christ died and rose from the dead?” He said, “They must have.” “They must have?” I said, “Crucifixion hadn’t even been invented yet. That was a Roman invention.” He didn’t know what to say about that. I said, “Okay, I’ll put the words in your mouth. Are you going to tell me that Abraham was saved by believing that Christ died and rose from dead?” You know what his answer was? Same thing – he must have!!

How could he? Paul makes it so plain that it was a mystery that had never been revealed until it was given to him. I said, “You haven’t got an ounce of ground to stand on.” But, you see, people get all upset. Because they think there’s always been one gospel. But look what it says here in the few moments we’ve got left. Verse 4 and this is the Judaizers, the leadership of Jerusalem, who are trying to put Paul and his converts back under the Law.

**Galatians 2:4**

“And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty (living in Grace) which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into (What?) bondage:” Whenever Paul uses that word, what’s he speaking of? The Law! Oh, they wanted to bring them back into the Law and under bondage. Next verse:

**Galatians 2:5**

“To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; (So that what?) that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.” That it wouldn’t be covered with legalism. Now verse 7:

**Galatians 2:7**

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision (the Gentiles) was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision (Jew) was unto Peter;” Now every time I teach that verse, what do I ask? How many gospels have you got in that one verse? Well, if you can count, two. The gospel of the uncircumcision is one, and the gospel of the circumcision, as I understand numbers, is two. Plain as day.

And we know now from the record, that’s the way it was. This is why there was so much friction between the Jewish community and Paul and his Gentile converts. And there was. All you have to do is go back into some of the historical aspect of all this. There was so much friction. All right, come on down to verse 8.

**Galatians 2:8**
“(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, (Jews) the same (the same God) was mighty in me toward the (other segment of the population) Gentiles:)” And then verse 9:

Galatians 2:9a

“And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, (They weren’t any more, because their whole—whatever you want to call it—was falling apart. It was no longer the center of everything. But they still thought it was,) perceived (understood) the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship;…”

They were gentlemanly enough to shake hands and say, all right, Paul, you’ve convinced us. Your message to the Gentiles is for you to take, and we’ll stay with Israel. Look at the verse again.

Galatians 2:9

“And when James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, understood the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we (Paul and Barnabas) should go unto the heathen, (Gentiles) and they (Peter, James, and John and the rest of the leadership in Jerusalem) unto the circumcision (Israel).”

And all the way through this, we have this concept that because of the commandment of the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul was indeed the Apostle of the Gentiles. All right, in the minute or two we’ve got left, we’ve got one more portion to prove that this man was writing by inspiration. He’s God’s man for this Age of Grace. Ephesians chapter 3. My goodness, I think I could teach these 9 or 10 verses every night of the week and never get tired of it. Because it is so plain. It is so explicit. Yet the majority of Christendom just totally ignores it.

Ephesians 3:1a

“For this cause,…” In other words, all that is written in the first two chapters. And most know, I guess, chapter 2 verses 8 and 9.

Ephesians 2:8

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:” So with that as the background, he says in chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:1-2

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2. If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:” See how plain that is? Now come all the way down to verse 9, the capstone of everything.

Ephesians 3:9
“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, (That is this whole concept of Grace.) which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:”

Well, what’s the man saying? That everything that he is taking to the Gentile world had been kept secret in the mind of God until it was revealed to him.
Okay, it’s good to see everybody. Again, we’re going to be getting right back to I Timothy chapter 1 and verse 2. For those of you joining us on television, oh, my, how can I say it, Honey? We just thrill at your letters. Many times you’ve told us you feel like you’re sitting in one of the back rows and are a part of this class. And that’s the way we like to keep it. We want to keep it simple. We want to keep it in such a way that anybody can identify with us. Hopefully we can help you to see what the Scriptures really say. I don’t claim to have all the answers. I don’t claim to be 100% right about everything. And I certainly don’t mind someone disagreeing with me on some things, as long as it doesn’t disagree with the basic fundamentals of our faith. So, we do appreciate your letters, your financial help, and most of all your prayers.

Iris and I just got back again from 3,200 miles of travel. We realize that the prayers of God’s people are with us. Okay, let’s get right back. This is Bible study, and we like to teach in a way that you can compare Scripture with Scripture. And again, as our letters indicate, to help you understand what you read. All right I Timothy chapter 1 verse 2. This letter is written to Timothy.

_I Timothy 1:2_

“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: (as I brought out in the last program) Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Now you want to remember that Timothy was up there in Asia Minor in the central part of Turkey. You remember his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, were Jewish. Timothy is part Jewish. His father was a Gentile, but evidently came to know the Lord through Paul’s ministry—probably in his first missionary journey, if I’m not mistaken. But whatever, he was a real, young person at the time when Paul first met him. I pointed this out, I think, in one of my other programs—how that Paul at this time is probably in his early 40’s and Timothy is probably around 18 or 20. There was about a 20 year age difference between the two men, but Timothy had just become such an avid follower of the Apostle Paul. And for this reason, then, Paul is more or less passing the mantle of his ministry over to this young man, as well as he will to Titus.

All right, so here he says that you’re my own son in the faith. Verse 3 is where I got the remarks from our last program that I thought Paul was probably up in northern Greece at the time that he writes this letter to Timothy. Who at the time is over in Ephesus and the area of western Turkey, or that part of Asia Minor at the time of the Roman Empire. He says in verse 3:

_I Timothy 1:3_
“As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,”

Now remember what I said in the last program? That was Paul’s constant concern—don’t be deceived. Don’t be led astray. But, you see, it can come in a hundred different forms. It was no different then than it is today. And it’s so subtle. You want to remember that the Devil has one objective. That is to lead people from God’s salvation. That’s his sole objective. And he doesn’t care how he does it. He’ll use the Scriptures. He’ll use churches. He’ll use anything that you can imagine.

But you think, oh, there’s nothing wrong with those things. No, not in their own innocent situations. But if they are used by the Devil to misguide people and to teach untruth, then he’s the winner. Because, you see, God is absolute. This is what I’m always trying to stress. You do not treat God like a Santa Claus. You do not just tweak His nose and say, “Well, this is the way I think it ought to be.” No, no! God is Sovereign. He’s absolute. I’ve used the word often throughout the programs – exclusivist! We have an exclusive Gospel. You cannot water it down with teachings of another and assume that God will accept it. He will not. He is Sovereign. He is absolute. And He is exclusivist.

I always have to remind people of the Lord’s words Himself back in Matthew when He says, “Narrow is the way...” And how many find it? Few! Few! Why? Because the majority wants to bend the rules and say, “Oh well, certainly God will accept me.” No, He won’t. God is absolute. All right, so here again he said to teach no other Gospel other than what Paul had taught Timothy himself in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Now verse 4 and this is exactly what we see in our day and time.

_I Timothy 1:4_

“Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister (or bring up) questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.”

A lot of times I’ll get questions in the mail from something way back in the Old Testament. And it isn’t even pertinent. I’ll write back, “Why do you spend your time majoring on minors? Major on the majors! Get into the truth of Paul’s Gospel. Get into the truth of Paul’s letters, because that’s where we are today.” I even made this statement when we finished our series in Revelation a few years ago and started in Romans. I’ve always noticed that it’s not at all hard to keep people interested in Genesis or Revelation, because both of those are pretty far removed from where we are in our present day and time.

But I was a little bit skeptical about holding my audience’s interest when I started Romans. But fortunately the Lord has surprised me, and people have remained interested. But usually people like to be in that area that they are not immediately concerned with. And the same way with a lot of questions, they lead up to nothing more than arguments and discussions with no truth to them. So Paul is warning Timothy—don’t be caught up in some of these things that just simply tend to bring argument. Now verse 5 and here’s where the meat of everything is.
Now when it comes to Paul speaking about love, I think there’s one chapter that should immediately come to mind. That is Romans chapter 13 starting in verse 8. This is this whole concept of love as Paul is admonishing Timothy to concern himself with. All right, Romans 13 verse 8:

Romans 13:8

“Owe no man (or defraud) any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” That’s quite a statement, isn’t it? How do we fulfill the law? With love. When we speak of Christ and His death on the cross, what put Him there? The love of God! His love for humanity put Him there.

The purpose of His going to the cross was to fulfill the demands of the Mosaic Law. Love is the fulfilling, then, of the Law. All right, just stop and think. This is just plain, logical, good common sense. If you have got the agape love, God’s love, which comes only by virtue of our salvation experience, can you steal from your neighbor? No! You can’t steal from someone you love. Can you commit adultery if you really love your spouse? No way. Can you be envious if you’re a loving type of person? Impossible! So you can go through all the various aspects of the Ten Commandments, and you’ll suddenly realize that love does indeed fulfill the Law.

That’s what Paul is teaching. We don’t have to keep the Law because we’re scared to death if we don’t we’re going to be stoned to death, as Israel was under the Law. We don’t have to be afraid of the wrath of God striking us if we break one of the commandments. But the whole concept here, Paul says, is that if we have the agape love. We have that love that only God can instill. Then look at verse 9. And this is all it says, that this is the mind of God for the human race. This is God’s best for humanity.

You know, it’s amazing. I said once and I’ll say it again. The Ten Commandments are so all-inclusive of human behavior, that if, and that’s a big if—because man is unable to do it. If mankind could keep the Ten Commandments, do you know we wouldn’t even have to have a legislature. We wouldn’t have to have a code book, or constitution. The human race would need nothing more than God’s perfect law. But man can’t keep it.

In fact, I was reading awhile back that Lennon and Trotsky and the fathers of Russian Communism were actually trying to pattern that after Acts chapter 2—the church in Jerusalem when they had all things common. But what Lennon and Trotsky did not take into consideration was the Adamic nature of the human race. And you know, it may be a beautiful concept, but it won’t work. Because the Adamic nature is greedy, and they are going to get all they can out of the system. We’re seeing it in our own beloved nation. The whole idea is, not what I can do for the government or the nation, as John Kennedy said, but what can it do for me. That’s the whole basis anymore for our thinking – what can I get?
Well, you see, love doesn’t operate that way. Love is what? Keeping the other person’s highest good. Remember that? And this is the love that Paul is talking about. All right, come all the way down to verse 10 where it says:

**Romans 13:10**

"Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love (the agape love) is the fulfilling of the law."

All right, now if you’ll come on over to Titus chapter 2 for a minute, you can see how Paul enlarges on this whole idea of living, not under the Law, but under Grace. How many hundreds of times have I said it over the last many years on television that Grace is not (What?) license! Grace doesn’t say, “Go out and do as you please because God’s Grace is going to cover you”. No, no! The Grace of God is quite the opposite. If once I understand all that God has done for me, then doesn’t it follow that I’m going to do all I can to please Him and be according to His precepts and not the world’s? All right, Titus chapter 2 and drop down to verse 11. This is just plain, good logic.

**Titus 2:11-12**

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. 12. Teaching us (the grace of God does) that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, (Not in eternity, but where?) in this present world;”

This is what God expects of us. This is what He has empowered us by His Holy Spirit to do. But does He force us? No, we’re under Grace. We’re unlimited. We’re free. All right, in that light, I’m going to take you all the way back to Romans again. Romans chapter 6 and I just pointed this out to one of the groups in Florida, if I’m not mistaken. As a believer in Grace we have total (What?) freedom! We are not constrained with rules and regulations. We’re not under thou shalt and thou shalt not. No, that’s not Grace. We’ve been set free.

Now the unbeliever thinks he’s free. But I’ve got news for him. He’s under the Devil’s chains. He has no freedom. He is under the god of this world, whether he knows it or not. You see, we’ve been set free. God does not put on us a heavy hand of rules and regulations, but that’s not license. He has given us freedom, and He has given us the free will to exercise that freedom. But based, again, on our whole love concept of God as well as our fellow man, then the choice is up to us. Romans chapter 6 and let’s just drop in at verse 11. Look at the language. See how clear it is that we are left with the free will?

**Romans 6:11**

“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now what does that word “reckon” imply? It’s up to you. If you want to let old Adam control your life, if you want to be a miserable Christian, you can be! You’re not going to lose your salvation because of it. You’re not going to be a happy, victorious
Christian, but that’s your freedom. That’s your liberty. Now let’s come on down to the next one in verse 12.

**Romans 6:12**

“*Let not sin* (Old Adam—I always use that in the place of the word *sin*. But again, what does the word “*let*” imply? It’s up to you. God isn’t going to force you. You’re now set free. And this is the liberty that Paul is constantly talking about.) *therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*”

But can you? Yes. You’ll be miserable. You won’t be a happy Christian. But God isn’t going to come and zap you if you do, because we’re free. All right, next one, verse 13, and the language is all the same. Different words, but it means the same thing.

**Romans 6:13**

“*Neither yield ye your members*…” Can you? Sure you can. But I’m going to give you the warning – you’ll be miserable. Because a sinning believer cannot be happy. He cannot enjoy the things of this world as a believer. But he’s free to. God isn’t going to knock him off his feet because he doesn’t live victoriously.

You remember—I think it was back in either I or II Timothy—I called them “*garbage can Christians.*” Some of you who have heard me teach before, I think that’s what it really is. In a great house there are things of gold and silver and beauty—expensive. But in every home, I don’t care whether it’s a millionaire’s or a pauper’s. What does there also have to be somewhere in the back? A garbage can! You can’t get along without it. Well, the believer has that choice. Do you want to be something that’s beautiful and functional in God’s purposes, or do you want to be a garbage can? It’s up to you. Now come back to I Timothy 1 verse 5.

**I Timothy 1:5**

“*Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart,*…” See, the world knows nothing of that kind of love. The world is constantly living in the *me* generation. Do you know that? The whole system is based on—what’s in it for me? But for the believer, we’re on the love basis. What is the other person’s highest good? Now then verse 6.

**I Timothy 1:6**

“*From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;*” Do you see what that’s saying? Just a lot of empty chatter that doesn’t amount to anything. But how many are involved? Fortunately, not all, but some. And I take that word for what it really is. A certain percentage is going to be doing this as believers. “*…having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;*” And now verse 7:

**I Timothy 1:7**
“Desiring to be teachers of the (What) law;...” Now, do you see what Paul is warning Timothy about? Timothy, one of the most subtle enemies that we have are people who are going to come in and try to take this out of Grace and put it back under the Law. Legalism. And it comes in a hundred different shades of colors, and every one of them is as devastating as the one before.

So Paul is constantly admonishing us to beware of those who would put us back under the Law in one sort or another. Now that doesn’t mean that you have to go all the way back to circumcision and temple worship and sacrifices and all that. That’s not necessarily what he means. Anything that smacks of legalism, and when I speak of legalism, I trust everybody knows what I mean. Legalism is doing something that you can do of your own volition.

I’ll use one example that is very easy to understand. Joining the church. Now just think about it. Can anyone make up their mind at some point in time and just simply go to some group and say, “I want to join the church.” Of course they can. There are a lot of groups that would be glad to take you. But, you see, that’s the flesh. That’s not the will of God, necessarily, to simply say, “I’m going to join the church.” That is legalism. And you can use any of the other facets you can think of that say, “This is what you have to do,” and you say, “Yeah, I can do that.” That’s legalism. It’s of the flesh. But Paul says don’t give in to those people.

I Timothy 1:7

Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” Now, do you know what that’s saying? They’re not going to do it based on Scripture.

Now hopefully, 99.99% of the time everything that I teach is based on Scripture. And, boy, if I don’t make that plain, I hear about it. They will say, “Well, Les, you said--.” I don’t know how many million times I’ve heard that—“Well, you said--.” Well, I’ve learned to be all the more careful that I don’t say anything that is of my own thinking, unless I qualify it. “Now this is what I think, or this is how I feel about it.” Otherwise, I simply say, “Now this is what the Book says.”

Now I’m going to take you back to Galatians again, if I may, where he says that these people are desiring to be teachers of the Law, understanding neither what they say nor what they affirm. So let’s go back to Galatians; which, of course, is the little letter that was written to a group of Gentile churches up in Galatia. Galatians chapter 4 and these little congregations were primarily Gentiles saved by Paul’s preaching of the Gospel of Grace.

But the Judaizers from the Jerusalem area were coming in, as we mentioned in our last program, and telling these people that Paul’s Gospel was not enough. They had to be circumcised. They had to keep the Law. They had to keep the Saturday Sabbath. They had to watch what they ate and all the things that pertained to the Law. So Paul hurriedly writes this little letter to the Galatian churches to warn them and to admonish them not to be brought back under the Law. Don’t be dragged back into legalism. Now we’re going to start, just for the fun of it, all the way up in verse 19 of Galatians 4. I haven’t done this in a long time. And he’s going to go all the way back to Genesis as his allegory. And he says:
Galatians 4:19

“My little children,...” Now remember, the whole concept here is to show the difference between Law and Grace, and how that Law was to be kicked out the back door, never to be brought into our Christian experience.

Galatians 4:19-21

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, 20. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. 21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”

You see, even right here in the Bible Belt. Haven’t you talked to someone about their eternity, and they’ll say, “Oh, I’m keeping the commandments. I’m doing the best I can. Surely God will accept me.” And this is what Paul is dealing with. Don’t you know what the Law demands if you’re going to be under the Law? And what is it? If you’re going to keep the Law to get into God’s Heaven, then you’ve got to keep it every jot and title—which no man can do! So, it’s foolish even to think you can. So Paul is warning them—don’t you realize what you’re saying? You can’t keep the Law good enough to satisfy a Holy God. That’s why Christ had to die to fulfill the Law. Well anyway, he comes on down and says in verse 22.

Galatians 4:22-23

“For it is written, (coming all the way back to Genesis) that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, (Which, of course, was Hagar.) and the other by a freewoman. (his legitimate wife, Sarah) 23. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; (God didn’t tell Abraham to have that child by the slave girl. Abraham and Sarah decided on it between themselves. So, Ishmael was of the flesh.) but he (Isaac) of the freewoman was by promise.”

God had told Abraham that he would have this son of promise. Now verse 24 and we’ll wrap this up quickly.

Galatians 4:24-25

“Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, (Law – the Ten Commandments) which is Hagar. 25. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.”

Now remember, Paul is writing this in about A.D. 60. The Temple isn’t destroyed until 10 years later. And he says, “…to Jerusalem which now is.....” So what’s he talking about? Under the Law – Temple worship, sacrifices, the whole nine yards. Now, for sake of time, we come down to verse 26. And, again, I want to have you read verse 30, but first verse 26.

Galatians 4:26
“But Jerusalem which is above is free, (That’s us, the heavenly people.) which is the mother of us all.” We’re under Grace and not under Law. Now come down to the verse that says it all – verse 30.

_Galatians 4:30-31_

“Nevertheless what saith the scripture? (Not what does man say; not what does your church say; but what does the scripture say?) Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”

Well, what’s he saying? We’re not under Law. We’re not under legalism. We’re under the Grace of God.
LESSON TWO * PART III

PAUL – FIRST IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

I Timothy 1:1-16

Okay, good to have everybody back. I usually have to explain what that means. We take a break between each half hour taping, and the coffee and cookies are kind of hard for the people to leave behind. Iris used to bake the cookies, but now most of the ladies and some of the men are chipping in and bringing them.

Okay, we’re just an informal Bible study. We always like to let folks know that we appreciate your financial help, your prayers, and your letters. Nothing thrills us more, as I’ve said over and over, than when people let us know that they’ve found salvation. As one person wrote, “If it weren’t for you, I’d still be lost.” Well, that’s encouraging, you know. And so many others say that for the first time in their life they enjoy their Bible. Well, that’s the only reason we teach. We don’t try to twist arms. We don’t try to convince someone that they’re wrong and we’re right. But just simply to get people enthused about reading and studying their own Bible.

All right, we’re going to pick up right where we left off in I Timothy chapter 1 and down at verse 8. Paul is still admonishing Timothy, of course, as to what to be aware of as he would soon be leaving the scene. I think even at this point in time—I think Paul realizes it wouldn’t be too long until either the Jews or the Romans would bring his ministry to an end. So now verse 8:

I Timothy 1:8

“But we know that the law (Now whenever he speaks of the law, we think primarily of the Ten Commandments. But it could also envelope the whole Mosaic system of temple worship and so forth. But generally, we think of law as the Ten Commandments.) is good, if (the condition is) a man use it lawfully (rightly);”

And I think we pointed that out a couple of programs back. Going back to Romans chapter 13, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.” When we use it in that respect, it is – it’s a good instrument. It certainly shows us the very mind of God—which is the benefit of all humanity. But now go into verse 9 and we have the other side of the coin – how the law affects the unrighteous.

I Timothy 1:9-10a

“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10. For whoremongers,…” and so forth.

Now I want to take you back again to Romans chapter 3, where we see both those facets explained from Paul’s letter to the Romans with regard to the Law for Israel who were under the Law, and how the Law applied to the pagan, wicked, immoral Gentiles. Romans chapter 3 and
I’ll drop in at verse 19. Now this shows both sides of what Paul is talking about in Timothy. For the righteous man, it’s good if you use it right. For the unrighteous man, it is his condemnation. All right, Romans 3 verse 19:

Romans 3:19

“Now we know (no ifs, ands, or buts) that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law:...” Now stop right there. Who was under the Law? Well, Israel! Israel was under the Law and Israel alone.

The world around Israel had no concept of what it was to have the Ten Commandments as part of their moral code. But don’t stop there. Even though it was given to those who were under the Law, the overall impact of the Law was that all the world, not just Israel, all of humanity:

Romans 3:19b

“…that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

Now you see, the Law had two premises here. Number one for Israel—it was the very backbone for their national behavior. It was around which everything revolved. It was their national entity.

But for the unbelieving world, it was an instrument of condemnation. Every person on earth, according to the Law, was an enemy—a law-breaking citizen of the earth. And all the world was declared guilty by virtue of the Law. Even Israel under the Law became almost as lawless as the Gentile world around them.

I always like to point that out by going back to Judges, the last chapter of Judges—chapter 21. And, of course, this was that 400 year period of time that Israel was on a roller coaster spiritually. They would come from the depths of despair overrun by their enemies and their neighbors, and then God would bring in a judge. Then Israel would have a spiritual renewal. They’d come back up and would enjoy the blessings of God. And then down they’d go, back into idolatry and all that it entailed. Then the day would come, and they would come back up. At the end of the Book of Judges, of course, they are down at one of those low levels again. They are in a place of a spiritual desert. And verse 25 says it all. And you know, whenever I look at our American fabric of morality today, this is the verse I have to think of. As Israel went, so many times we see our own beloved nation going.

Judges 21:25

“In those days (when Israel was at the bottom of her spiritual life) there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” What do we call it today? Situation ethics. If you’re in a situation and you’re comfortable with it, and it is okay in your own eyes, do it! But that doesn’t line up with the Word of God. So here again we find that the Law—so far as Israel was concerned, and it was used lawfully—it was good. But to the Gentile lost world, it was condemnation. It showed them their horrible sin.
All right, if you’ll come with me to I Timothy 1:10—where Paul, again, is delineating the behavior of the lost world. These are those who are operating under the energy of the flesh.

*I Timothy 1:10*

“For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;”

All of that is laid out in the open by the Law. Because when the Law said, “Thou shalt not—,” this is what God knew was best for the human race. Because (as I said in one of the previous programs even this afternoon) if society could keep the Law, then this world would be a good place to live. But man can’t do it. Man’s greed, man’s old Adamic nature flies in the face of the moral code. Now let’s move on to verse 11.

*I Timothy 1:11*

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” And, you know, the vast majority of Christendom still doesn’t know that. They, as I’ve said over and over—especially the last several months of our teaching—treat Paul as an unwanted step-child. Oh, he’s there, but they don’t want anything to do with him.

How many times have Iris and I both experienced it in our travels. Even here in Oklahoma someone will come up and say, “I’ve always detested Paul. He’s a woman hater. He’s arrogant. He’s an egotist. But you’ve shown me something totally different.” Again, in just the last few weeks, it has happened a couple of times. Someone has said, “You have totally changed my attitude toward the Apostle Paul. I see now he is the one that we have to adhere to. He is the one that God designated as our apostle.”

All right, so look at the verse again.

*I Timothy 1:11*

“According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.” Who did God give this gospel to? The Apostle Paul! You know, I’ve so often used the verse, and before we go back and look at Paul’s Gospel, we’re going to look at it again for the umpteenth time.

II Peter chapter 3 verses 15 and 16. I’m going to drum this home every chance I get. Because how many people, when they ignore Paul say, “Well, I go by what Jesus taught.” And Peter, of course, is the epitome of what Jesus taught. He was with Him those three years. This is why, as I’ve said on the program before, and I’ll say it again—I suppose 90% of our Sunday morning preaching is out of the four gospels. That’s where they think it’s at. Well, I’ve got news for them, that’s NOT where it’s at.
That’s background like the Old Testament is background. It’s for our learning. But you won’t find the gospel of salvation in the four gospels. It’s not in there. I pointed out to someone just the other day. Stop and think. When Christ was walking the dusty roads of Palestine and the Twelve were with Him, He hadn’t gone to the cross yet. He hadn’t died yet. How can they be proclaiming a gospel of salvation that hadn’t been finished? He told the Twelve in Luke 18:

_Luke 18:31b, 33-34a_

“...we go up to Jerusalem, and all things written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. 33. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. (So far so good, but what does the next verse say?) 34. And they (the 12) understood none of these things:...”

They didn’t know He was going to die. And after he was crucified, they had no idea He was going to be resurrected from the dead. That was all unknown to them. It wasn’t until God reveals that post resurrection. That post ascension Christ who now reveals to the Apostle the gospel of the blessed God as he calls it here in Timothy. Look at II Peter chapter 3. Now this is Peter himself, the legalist of Galatians chapter 2, who now at the end of his life writes to his Jewish readers.

_II Peter 3:15_

“And account (or understand) that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even (Now look at this carefully.) as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;”

Well, what do you suppose is the wisdom that Peter is referring to? The revelation of those mysteries! Paul is always saying, behold, I show you a mystery. I am the minister of the mystery which was hid in God. It was kept secret. All right, this is what Peter is telling us—that the wisdom given unto Paul now comes through his epistles. Now verse 16:

_II Peter 3:16_

“As also in all his epistles, (Not just the Book of Hebrews, which I think he refers to in verse 15.) speaking in them of these things; (that which pertains to salvation and our eternal destiny) in which are some things hard to be understood, (At the end of his life, probably A.D. 65 or 66, Peter still couldn’t comprehend the whole revelation that had been give to Paul. He said it’s hard for him to understand and not for him only.) which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, (twist) as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

Well, what is this gospel of salvation? Back to I Corinthians, if you will, chapter 15, which we use so often. I trust that people who have been listening to me for a period of time can almost recite it in their sleep. I Corinthians 15 and the first 4 verses is the most explicit, clear-cut explanation of the Gospel in all of Scripture. This says it all, yet not quite all, because Paul doesn’t mention the blood here. That has to be implied from other Scriptures. _I Corinthians 15_
verses 1-4. Here is the Gospel for us Gentiles today. This is the Gospel of the blessed God he referred to in I Timothy chapter 11. This is what you must believe in your heart for salvation.

I Corinthians 15:1a

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel…” Not A gospel. Now we’re down to one. I grant you, in the last program I said there were two: the Gospel of the Jew—which was the Kingdom Gospel; and the Gospel of Grace—which was for the Gentiles. But the Kingdom Gospel dropped off the scene. Now we’re left with ONE Gospel—the Gospel of the Grace of God—Paul’s Gospel.

I Corinthians 15:1b

“…which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, (After all, these Corinthians to whom he is writing had come out of paganism.) and wherein ye stand;”

I Corinthians 15:2

“By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” And I always qualify that: it is to know what you believe. And here’s the Gospel in verse 3.

I Corinthians 15:3-4

“For I delivered unto you first of all (That’s the first thing that Paul brought to the Corinthian people.) that which I also received, (From whom? Peter? No. From John? No. From Christ in His earthly ministry? No. But rather from the ascended Christ after His death, burial, and resurrection. That’s when he received it.) how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures:” That’s our Gospel of salvation!

Now, you hear a lot of invitations, and they will speak of—do you believe that Christ died for you—and that’s as far as they go. That’s not the Gospel. The Gospel is that Christ died and was buried and rose from the dead.

And as Paul says in this same chapter a little further on, if we cannot believe in the resurrection, we of all people are most miserable, because that’s the heart of our Gospel. That’s the heart of our hope for eternity. If Christ had not been raised, then we’re just like an animal. We die and it’s over. But that’s not the way it is. Christ DID arise from the dead. He IS alive evermore. And as such, of course, He will one day take us unto Himself.

And now I’m going to show in a few verses what Paul is constantly referring to as his Gospel, even as we did in an earlier program. Turn with me now to Romans chapter 2 verse 16. A verse, again, and maybe I’ve said it before—very few church members realize this verse is in the Bible. They don’t even know it’s here. I’ve experienced it over and over when they come up
and tell me, “I didn’t ever see this verse before.” But look how it is again so exclusivist. Verse 16 of Romans 2.

**Romans 2:16**

“In the days when God (in the person of Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne) shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (And how are they going to be judged?) according to my (Paul’s) gospel.” That’s what it says. Now I know that there were people that lived before Paul began preaching the Gospel of Grace. But as I’ve said so often, even when we teach Tribulation events, it’s numbers.

There have been more people living on the planet in this last 2,000 years since Paul’s Gospel than ever lived before. So the vast majority of the human race is going to come before God lost, and they are going to be judged according to Paul’s Gospel. That’s what it says – “According to my gospel.” And, you know, most people don’t even realize what that is.

All right, let’s look at another one. Romans chapter 16 verse 25. This is a verse that I use often. And it is a verse that you will not hear routinely in Sunday morning preaching. You just don’t hear it. It’s just like it isn’t here, but it is—right in front of you.

**Romans 16:25a**

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel,…” Now you see, whenever Paul teaches or preaches this Gospel, he always associates it with the power of God.

You go up into Romans chapter 6 and some of these other chapters, and he likens it to the same power that raised Christ from the dead. It is the power that raised us from our lost position. That’s the kind of power we have exercised. That’s what we are trusting in. It isn’t just a matter of easy-believism, but by faith we trust what God accomplished on our behalf when Christ died, shed His blood, and rose from the dead. And then it’s the power of God that does everything that needs to be done. All right, back to the text, verse 25 again.

**Romans 16:25**

“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, (Now here’s Paul’s Gospel again,) and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (not according to Peter, not according to John, not according to Christ’s earthly ministry) according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since (How long?) the world began.”

That’s why I said several programs back, that there was no way that Abraham could be saved by Paul’s Gospel. It hadn’t been revealed yet. They had no concept that God would save a pagan Gentile out of his deepest sin by just simply exercising his deepest faith in what God had done. It was unbelievable. It had never been heard of.

Oh, God had the Gentiles on His mind in the Old Testament, of course, but it had to be through Israel. But now He’s going to the Gentile world without Israel. And that was unheard of. That’s
why it was a secret kept in the mind of God. That’s why Paul is constantly referring then to his revelations of these things that had been kept secret since the world began and now have been made manifest, as he says in verse 26. Now let’s go a little further with Paul’s Gospel. Let’s turn the page, at least in my Bible, to I Corinthians chapter 1 verses 17 and 18.

**I Corinthians 1:17a**

“For Christ…” Now always remember, when Paul speaks of Christ speaking to him, where is Christ? In Glory! Ascended. The work of the cross is finished. Everything that God demanded of the human race was fulfilled in that work of the cross. So now look what he says.

**I Corinthians 1:17a**

“For Christ (the ascended Lord) sent me not to baptize, (Notice that is not the same as Matthew 28:19. Paul had a different mission for the Body of Christ.) but to preach the gospel:…” What gospel? Paul’s Gospel. And what is Paul’s Gospel? That Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead.

**I Corinthians 1:17**

“For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, (In other words, not with smooth oratory. Not with some preacher that can keep an audience in his lap with comedy, but--) lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” And then verse 18 says it so plainly.

**I Corinthians 1:18**

“For the preaching of the cross (that death, burial, and resurrection) is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved (Here it comes now. I just said a moment ago--) it is the (What?) power of God.”

You see, that’s why good works can never save anybody. Our good works do not involve the power of God. Joining a church does not involve the power of God. Being baptized does not invoke the power of God. This is something that God releases the moment He sees our faith. And that’s a heart thing only God can see!

My, I always have to just shake my head. How can people keep on doing that which only God can do? Man can’t look on another man’s heart. Only God can do that. No deacon can look at somebody and say, “Oh, yes, you’re a believer.” It’s impossible. No preacher can look at a man and say, “Oh, yeah, you’re a believer.” It’s impossible.

We go by their words, but only God can look into the heart. And when God looks into the heart and He sees that faith, then He does all the rest. He invokes the power of eternal life. He invokes His justification. He invokes His forgiveness. He invokes the power of the Holy Spirit to indwell us. Hey, that isn’t anything that man can do. That is all involved in that work of the
power that is released the moment we believe. And then, of course, yes, we’re going to grow in our Christian experience to become more involved in Scripture, in prayer, and in witnessing.
Okay, it’s good to have everybody in again. Once more we’re going to go right back to where we left off in I Timothy chapter 1. We’re going to pick it up in verse 13. Jerry’s got 14 on the board, but we’ll look at verse 13 first.

For those of you joining us on television—in case this is the first program that you’ve caught—we’re just an informal, non-denominational Bible study. I don’t know how many different groups are represented here in the studio, but we don’t pay attention to that. We’re just going to teach the Word and, as I’ve said so often, we just let the chips fall where they may.

I don’t expect everyone to agree with me on every point. We don’t have to. There’s certainly room enough for disagreement as long as we agree on the basic fundamentals of who Christ is and what He’s done and the inerrancy of the Scriptures—all those good things that we will not have any room for compromise. I think I can go right on into the Scripture without any more announcements or anything more to do. I think they are letting the folks know at the end of the program what’s available.

Let’s go right back into I Timothy chapter 1. We’ll start the program with verse 13, where Paul, of course, is still writing to this young man, Timothy, during this time that he’s out of prison. He probably has a year or two until he’s taken back and arrested, whereupon he will be martyred. But as he speaks with regard to the ministry that Christ gave him in verse 12, he goes back and he never forgets the fact he was--

I Timothy 1:13

“...a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: (In other words, to Jewish believers who would embrace Jesus as the Messiah.) but (Flip-side—even though he was the greatest enemy of Christ on the earth at that time--) I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

Again, remember that the Grace of God was poured out on this man without merit. He had no reason to spare him. God could have just as well zapped him and taken him off the scene. Instead, He decides, or He chose, to use this man to become the Apostle of this Gospel of Grace. Now never lose sight of the fact that Saul of Tarsus was intensely religious. Saul lived and breathed his religion. In the name of his religion he thought nothing to put the adversaries of that religion to death. He hated the name of Jesus of Nazareth, because he thought Jesus was an imposter. Saul thought that Jesus was something that went against Judaism. Consequently, Saul was, as he says here, a persecutor of those Jews who had believed who Jesus was. Now verse 14:

I Timothy 1:14a
“And the grace...” Now no writer of Scripture uses that word as often as the Apostle Paul. Just check me out. Go to a good concordance and you’ll find that Paul uses the word grace almost more than all the rest of Scripture together. And so he says:

**I Timothy 1:14**

“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

Let’s go back and take another look in Acts, if you will. Go back to Acts 26. I think we looked at it in our first program this afternoon. But I want you to see the thinking of this man as he was headed to Antioch up in Syria to gather in those Jews who had become believers of Christ’s Messiahship, even though they were living outside of the land of Israel. Now that tells me something. That tells me that the Jewish leadership had enough clout with Rome that Rome would actually extradite these Jewish people whom the Jews wanted to arrest.

They must have, because he could go to a foreign country and, like kidnapping, take people and bring them back. So there must have been an agreement with Rome that they would permit this to take place. But whatever, now he explains it in the first person in Acts 26 and verse 4. And remember, he is speaking to King Agrippa. He has now been arrested by the Jewish authorities who are, of course, trying to get rid of the man. But now he’s rehearsing before King Agrippa his life up through Judaism until he became an Apostle.

**Acts 26:4-6**

“My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation (that is among Israel) at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5. Which knew me from the beginning, (in other words, from his family’s beginnings up in Tarsus) if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:”

Which was that one day God Himself would come in the person of the Messiah, the Son of God, to be the King of Israel. This was the promise to the fathers. Now verse 7:

**Acts 26:7**

“Unto which promise our twelve tribes, (the twelve sons of Jacob) instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.” In other words, Paul is now proclaiming that this One who had been crucified and risen from the dead was the One promised to Abraham and the Old Testament prophets. Now verse 8:

**Acts 26:8-9**

“Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? 9. I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Paul is admitting.).” Now verse 10:
Acts 26:10

“That thing I also did in Jerusalem: (Now here it comes.) and many of the saints (That is the Jewish believers in that Jesus was the Christ.) did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they (these Jews who were under Saul’s persecution) were put to death, I gave my voice against them.”

Now I know the King James uses the word voice. I don’t know what your other translations have, but the marginal is vote. That implies, of course, that Saul of Tarsus must have been a member of the Sanhedrin. Because they were the ones that voted to put these people in prison or put them to death. So I take from this—and now I’m running into other writers who are taking the same approach—that since he was a member of the Sanhedrin, it was a requirement (just like Paul’s requirement for deacons and pastors) that they had to be a husband and a father.

And, of course, the premise was—how can you deal with things unless you know how to deal with a family situation. So the Sanhedrin was a consortium of husbands and fathers with children, who were more or less the religious governing body of Israel. And he’s the leader of that. And as a member of that, he voted to put those Jewish believers to death.

Now again, stop and think. Who must have permitted all that? Rome! They couldn’t do this without the Roman authorities knowing it. So, I have to feel that the leaders of Israel had enough clout with the Roman government that they could carry out this kind of execution with no opposition. All right, reading on in verse 11.

Acts 26:11-12

“And I punished them oft in every synagogue, (He was relentless in persecuting them.) and compelled them to blaspheme; (Now how do you suppose he did that? I think torture. I think he was literally able to torture these people into finally relenting and recanting their faith in Jesus of Nazareth.) and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. (Which, of course, was Damascus.) 12. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,”

Then he goes on to say how the Lord arrested him there, you might say, at the gates of Damascus and dropped the man to his knees. Whereupon he said what? “Who art thou, Lord? And Jehovah says, I am Jesus…” You know, I always like to make a point of that. Can you imagine how the man must have just melted like butter in a hot sun? When he suddenly realized that the name he hated was the same Jehovah that he worshipped.

Quite a come-off, wasn’t it? And yet, that is what I think drove the Apostle for the next 20 something years. That regardless of how many beatings he took, regardless of the stoning, the shipwreck, the suffering—he never forgot meeting the Lord Jesus face-to-face there on the road to Damascus. It must have been a face-to-face experience for the Apostle. Now then, if you’ll come back to I Timothy chapter 1 verse 14 again.

I Timothy 1:14
“And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

Now then, we’re going to look into a part that I feel very few people can comprehend. And again, I don’t expect people to agree with me until they see it with their own eyes. But I think it’s so obvious. Here Paul is going to show that he is the first—the head of the line—of this whole composition of believers from every walk of life, from every racial background that have come in to make up the Body of Christ; which, remember, is only used by Paul. You will never find the term the Body of Christ any place but in Paul’s writings. Never does Peter refer to it. Never did Jesus refer to it. It is a Pauline revelation – the Body of Christ. So I feel, and I don’t condemn people if they don’t agree with me, that Paul must have been at the head of the line. Now let’s look at it. Verse 15:

I Timothy 1:15

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, (There’s no room for argument.) that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; (That is for sure.) of whom I am chief.”

Now every sermon that I’ve ever heard on this verse, and I imagine everybody else has ever heard, they are pointing out what a wicked sinner Saul of Tarsus was. “And if God could save Saul, He could save anybody.” But the word chief doesn’t mean that. The word chief in Scripture doesn’t mean the worst. It means the first, the head man. Now we’re going to show that from Scripture. Turn with me, if you will, to Luke chapter 22, and we’re going to look at the word chief. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom Paul is the chief. All right, but what’s a chief? Luke chapter 22 and verse 26 and Jesus is speaking.

Luke 22:26

“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, (or the head man of your group) as he that doth serve.”

Now, how is the word used? Wicked? Sinful? No. He that is chief, who is the head man of your group, let him condescend to be the least. All I’m showing is that the word chief does not mean sinful or wicked. It means the first. Acts 14 verse 12. Paul and Barnabas are now up in Asia Minor. They have performed a miracle, and these pagans are all shook up. They began to think that these men were gods of some sort or another, and they began to worship them. Now Acts 14:12:

Acts 14:12

“And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he (Paul) was the chief speaker.”

Does that mean he was the most vile? The most sinful? The most wicked? No. He spoke with the most authority. He was above Barnabas. He was the first of the two. All right, we can go on to the next one, and that would be in Acts 28 verse 7. We’re still showing the same thing, that
the word *chief* in Scripture doesn’t mean sinful or wicked or the worst. It simply means the head man, the beginning of the line. Verse 7 of Acts 28:

*Acts 28:7*

“In the same quarters…” Now remember, it was after they’re shipwrecked in Acts 28. They’re on the island of Melita; and a serpent, I think, has just bitten Paul. Now verse 7:

*Acts 28:7*

“In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.”

Now was Publius the most wicked man on the island? No! What was he? Probably the governor, the head man. He was the *chief* man on the island. Am I making my point? Never does *chief* mean worst. All right, now one more—Romans chapter 3 verse 2 and, again, Paul is showing the advantage that the nation of Israel had. They had the temple. They had the priesthood. They had the miracles of God. But the most important thing going for Israel was in verse 2. Let’s read verse 1 so we can pick up the flow.

*Romans 3:1-2*

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2. Much every way: (The Jews had so much going for them.) *chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*” (or the Word of God. You know what the word *chiefly* means? The *number one* reason was they had the Word of God.)

All right, now I hope I have established that the word *chief* doesn’t mean the most sinful, or the most wicked. It merely means the head of the line, the first one of a group. All right, back to I Timothy chapter 1.

*I Timothy 1:15b*

“…that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; (That is by Grace.) *of whom* (Paul says) *I am chief.*” (The head of the line – I’m the first.) Now verse 16:

*I Timothy 1:16a*

“Howbeit for this cause (So that he could be the first.) I obtained mercy, (grace, and love) *that in me* (And again, what’s the next word?) *first* (not second, not hundredth—that in me first) *Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering…”*

Now stop and think a moment. Was there ever a greater manifestation of the Grace of God than when God saved Saul of Tarsus? Never! Never! He was the most wicked, so far as Christ was concerned, that had ever lived. They didn’t come any worse. Oh, it was in the name of religion. He hated Jesus of Nazareth. He just detested him and was doing everything, even murdering and
adherence of it, to stamp it out. All right, he obtained the Grace of God, His unmerited favor that in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering—in other words, His patience, His love, and again, His mercy, His Grace. Now the rest of the verse:

*I Timothy 1:16b*

“...Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern...” What’s a pattern, for goodness sakes? What’s a pattern, ladies? Come on, you all go to a fabric shop, I think, at some time whether you’re young or old. Now what do you do with a pattern? Well, it’s the beginning! It’s the original of whatever you’re going to make.

And if you make three or four or five of them, what are you still going to use? The pattern! You know, I think I gave the illustration a few years ago. I was cutting rafters one day, and I was just a young man. My dad came along and I had rafters cut, you know, all over the place. And he said, “Which one is your pattern?” “Gosh, Dad, I don’t know. I just use whatever one I pick up.” He said, “You’re going to have a roof that’s as sway-backed as an old horse.” Why? Because I was not using the same pattern for every cut. And it’s the same word here. The Apostle Paul is the original!!

A verse just comes to mind. I didn’t intend to use this. Back to I Corinthians, Honey, chapter 4 verse 16. This follows right along with what we’ve been saying. If he is the pattern, then look what it says.

*I Corinthians 4:16*

“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of (Who?) me.” Why? He is the pattern! He’s the first.

Turn over to I Corinthians chapter 11 verse 1. This will make people feel a little bit better. Because they come back and say, “I’m not going to follow Paul. I’m going to follow Jesus.” Well, now wait a minute. If you’re going to follow Jesus of the Gospels—I usually put it this way. If you’re going to follow in His footsteps, when you come to the Sea of Galilee He can keep right on going. What are you going to do? Well, you can’t follow. But this man (Paul) I can, because he’s as human as we are. He suffered the same pains and passions that we do. Now look what he says in chapter 11 verse 1.

*I Corinthians 11:1*

“Be ye followers of me, (Why?) even as I also am of Christ.” You see that? Now that’s so logical. The ascended Lord has given Paul all the instructions for everything we need.

And as he listened to what Christ told him and wrote by inspiration, we can rest assured that we can follow this Apostle. Now back to I Timothy chapter 1 verse 16. We’ve got to go quickly. There’s one more portion of Scripture that I’d like to cover yet before this half hour is over. Verse 16 reading on:
**I Timothy 1:16**

“Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter…”

Now go back to the rafters. After I had 3 or 4 cut, where should I go back? To the pattern! Not to the 4th or the 5th one. And it’s the same way here. You don’t follow somebody else that came later. We follow the one who is the pattern of the Grace of God. Now then, reading on.

**I Timothy 1:16c**

“…a pattern to them which should hereafter believe…” He doesn’t say anything about all these other things that came from Peter and Christ in His earthly ministry. Now, it’s a matter of exercising our faith in his (Paul’s) gospel of I Corinthians 15:1-4.

All right, I’ve got one more portion of Scripture that tells us the same thing. I Corinthians chapter 3 and I hope I’ve got enough time. I Corinthians chapter 3 and, oh, if this doesn’t make it so plain. Now remember, he’s the head of the line. He’s the chief man. And we’re to follow. Everybody comes into the Body of Christ, I feel, after the Apostle Paul.

**I Corinthians 3:9**

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, (Like a vineyard as Christ used the parable. But Paul also uses another analogy.) ye are God’s building.” We are building a part of that which pertains to the Body of Christ. All right, verse 10:

**I Corinthians 3:10**

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me (Not because he deserved it—he was the least, but God made him the chief.) as a wise masterbuilder,…”

Now stop. If you were to build a new home, or if you’ve already built one in the past, when do you ask your contractor to come in and take over? When the building is a fourth finished? No. You find your contractor before you even set the stakes. He’s going to set the stakes where your foundation is going to be. Isn’t that right? He’s the masterbuilder. Now according to most of Christendom, Paul comes in when the first floor is finished. Jesus and the Twelve laid the foundation and built the first floor, and now here comes Paul and he adds to it. No, it doesn’t say that. It says that I am the masterbuilder. I am the one who has started from scratch. Now read on:

**I Corinthians 3:10b**

“I have laid the foundation,…” Jesus didn’t lay it. You know, I appreciated one magazine years back saying that Jesus never started anything. Oh, I couldn’t agree more. But look at the next verse.
I Corinthians 3:11

“For other foundation can no man lay (not Peter, not John, nobody) than that is laid, (And whose the foundation?) which is Jesus Christ.”

That’s the foundation on which Paul’s Gospel rests. That’s the foundation on which our whole eternal destiny rests. And from that foundation our faith can grow, can build. We bring in other believers, and all these believers together are making up what Paul alone calls the Body of Christ.
Okay, good to see everybody out again this afternoon. It’s a rainy day here in Tulsa, and we’re thankful, of course, that you chose to come out to be part of our studio audience. For those of you joining us on television, no matter where you may be, we always like to make it known that we’re just an informal Bible study. And as I look up and down the tables, every one of you has your own Bible. We appreciate so much hearing from you and sharing your thoughts.

I’ve said it before—so many of you have told us you feel like you’re right here in the classroom with us. We’ve got some new folks in from Minnesota, another couple, and they said, well, we just feel like we know all these people because we see them every day. So again, we cherish those letters and your financial help and your prayers. Because we do feel like we’re beginning to reach a lot of folks from one end of this country to the other.

All right, now we’re going to go right into the Scriptures. After all, that’s what we’re here for. So let’s go right in where we left off in our last program, which was I Timothy chapter 1 and verse 17. Now, maybe I should, again, just make a quick review as to the historical setting of this little letter of I Timothy.

More than likely, although not everyone agrees, the Apostle Paul had been in prison in Caesarea, there in the land of Israel on the coast, for probably a year and a half. Then he took that ship to Rome, whereupon he suffered shipwreck. Then finally he ended up in Rome in prison. Supposedly, declaring his own defense without benefit of any professional attorneys, he gained an acquittal. I’m beginning to agree to that more and more. And after being released—after probably a couple or three years in prison during which time he wrote what we call the Prison Epistles. Which, of course, are: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

But anyway, the Prison Epistles are not all of Paul’s writings. The earlier ones, remember, were written from various places in his missionary journeys. After the Prison Epistles, if he was out—and like I said, I think more and more he probably was. During that interval, then—before he was arrested the second time—he wrote I Timothy and Titus. II Timothy, of course, was written during the time he was in prison the second time. After which time, he was taken out for his beheading.
So as you read I Timothy—and we’ll go from I Timothy, in a few weeks, over to Titus—both of those letters were during that period of time between the first and the second imprisonment. It stands to reason from his language that he’s not writing from prison itself. All those things kind of help; and, of course, by now we’re well up into the A.D. 60’s. It’s probably 62, 63, 64 or somewhere in there. And all these little churches and congregations have been formed throughout Paul’s journeys. Mostly, of course, in Asia—Asia Minor, which is Turkey today—and up and down Greece, and, of course, the church in Rome. To those churches he has been addressing his previous letters.

Now you always want to remember that for the first ten years—in fact, I think I’ll put it on the board. It’s been a long time since I’ve used the board. Just make a timeline of Paul’s life and epistles and so forth. I think instead of going horizontally, I’m going to take it vertically, if I may.

Let’s take approximate dates. Now whenever we talk about dates in Scripture, I don’t care whether it’s the Old Testament or the New, chronologers never agree. I’ve never seen two chronologers agree within a short time span whatsoever. So there’s always that period of guesswork, and it really doesn’t make that much difference. So when I put these figures up, I don’t set them in concrete, as it were. They are approximations.

So, in A.D. 37 we have Saul’s conversion on the road to Damascus. That, of course, is back in Acts chapter 9. And that is where we finally have a real detailed description of this new character coming up in the Book of Acts. Then after the three year hiatus, whether it was all in Arabia or partially, makes no difference. But in about A.D. 40 he begins his ministry. He begins going to the Gentile world.

Then, he does not write any of his letters—there is nothing yet from the pen of the Apostle Paul—until, probably, we’re going to say about A.D. 56 when he writes the Thessalonian letters. They were the first ones written even though they are at the end of the first group of Prison Epistles. Then he doesn’t write much more, again, until we get up to the early A.D. 60’s. And in the early A.D. 60’s, he writes Galatians and Romans and the Corinthian letters. Then after you get past the early A.D. 60’s—in between A.D. 60 to 65, we have the rest of his Prison Epistles. And somewhere in there we’re seeing the first letter to Timothy. Then, of course, at the very end of his ministry, or the end of his life, probably around A.D. 66, he will write his final letter, which is II Timothy.

And the reason we know II Timothy is the final is because, you see, that’s where he makes reference to his being offered. In fact, turn with me to that portion, and you can see what we’re talking about. Just jump over to II Timothy. This is his last writing. II Timothy chapter 4 verse 7 and you can almost sense the heart of the
Apostle as he now writes this final letter to his son in the faith, young Timothy. No, let’s go back to verse 6. I’m sorry, verse 6, where he says:

II Timothy 4:6-7

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure (That is from this world.) is at hand. 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:” Doesn’t that just tear at you? Here the man has gone all these years now—from A.D. 40 on up to about A.D. 66, a period of about 25 or 26 years—suffering inexorably, one thing after the other, just to keep the Word going out.

In fact, I had a letter the other day which reminded me of this. He said, “Les, I’ve come to know the Lord through your program. But is it always this way? It just seems the minute I became a believer the bottom fell out of everything. My business began to suffer, somebody in the family had bad health…” and, ah, he just went on event after event. It would be enough to destroy your faith.

But as I was reading his letter, this is what I thought of. Look what the Apostle Paul suffered for 25 years as God’s chosen vessel. Now you would think, ordinarily, he should have just had a rose-petaled highway. But that isn’t the way it works. He suffered and he suffered and he suffered and only for one reason: to get the Gospel of salvation, as found in I Corinthians 15:1-4, out to the Gentile world.

And then he ends up having his head knocked off. So you see, whenever we as believers suffer set-backs and reverses and maybe bad health, don’t despair. Don’t think for a minute that this is a sign there’s something wrong. No. Because this is the way it has happened invariably. Here this man endured 25 or 26 years of suffering physically constantly, so that he could take the Gospel to the ends of the Roman Empire. Then verse 8, but he never despaired.

II Timothy 4:8

“Henceforth (In other words, now that he’s at the end of his earthly sojourn.) there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, (But to whom?) but unto all them also who love his appearing.”

You know what that means? The easiest crown a believer can gain is this one. Are you looking for the Lord’s return? Are you expectantly looking up and hoping for His soon return? Because if you do, and you do it sincerely, you’ve got one crown for sure—it’s what I say is the easiest one to attain.
Well anyway, II Timothy was written when he’s back in prison. He’s waiting for his execution to be carried out. But in I Timothy, he’s out of prison. He’s evidently won his own acquittal, and he’s writing from somewhere, probably up in Northern Greece. The language is such that we know it’s being written not in prison but rather out. And so is the Book of Titus. So we’ll take I Timothy, Titus, and probably Philemon, and then we’ll come back and wind up the Apostle’s ministry with the little letter to II Timothy. All right, back to I Timothy now for the rest of this program—verse 17—where we left off last week.

_I Timothy 1:17_

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” All right, now we’re going to have to stop here a minute. Because, you remember, I’ve always made the point that Paul never refers to Christ as the King of the Church. He’s not referring to Christ being the King of the Church. He’s the Head of the Body for us as the Church people. But here he’s merely using the term King to show His Sovereignty—that He is a part and parcel of that eternal Sovereign Godhead. And that brings up another verse. Come back with me a moment to Colossians chapter 2 verse 9, because we’ve got to back up everything I say with Scripture.

Because I’ll tell you what, I’ve got a discerning and a critical audience. And that’s as it should be. I don’t mind a bit. And if I say something that isn’t definitively written, they say, “Now, Les, you’re always saying, ‘What does the Book say?’ But this time you said something that was your own idea.” Well, I try to always qualify that. I’ll almost always try to say, “Now this is my idea. I can’t show this from Scripture.” But when possible, I’m going to come right back and show you why I’m saying what I’m saying.

_Colossians 2:9_

“For in him (Now, of course, you have to look up at verse 8 a minute, and it speaks of Christ, so--) For in him (in Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the (What?) the Godhead (Or the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—what we call the Triune God.) for in Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (What’s the next word?) bodily.”

Bodily. Now see, here’s where we have a change of venue or whatever—modus operandi. Come back to Timothy, if you will. Because you see, all the way up until Christ’s first advent, the Godhead was—and again, going back there into Colossians 1—the Godhead was what? Invisible. Nobody had ever seen God at any time in the Triune Godhead. It was invisible.
Now granted, God the Son stepped out of that, and—we’ll be looking at that maybe—well, if I’m going to look at it right now or a little bit later, but—well, I’m going to wait unto we get to chapter 2. We’re going to look at it again, how that out of that invisible Triune Godhead back in the Old Testament economy, we have God the Son stepping out periodically and appearing in human form. But only in human form and then He goes back into that invisible Godhead. We’ll be looking at it, like I said, in a future program.

But what you have to understand is that as soon as Christ came in the flesh, the Godhead is no longer totally invisible. Because now, I guess I’m going to have to bring you back to Colossians, as I’ve just got to use the Scriptures. Come back to Colossians chapter 1. Because see, there’s so much confusion about this invisible Godhead and some of the statements concerning God and so forth. Well, it’s really not that difficult if you just recognize what Paul says here in Colossians 1 verse 15. The Scripture makes it so plain. It is speaking again of the Son up there in verse 13.

Colossians 1:15

“Who (the Son) is the image (Or something that you can see and touch—God the Son is the image of the what?) of the invisible God,...” That’s what your Bible says. God the Son is the visible manifestation of the invisible God. The Godhead, up until Christ took on flesh, was indeed invisible. Nobody had ever seen the Godhead.

All right, now since He has been born at Bethlehem, He has become the image, or the visible manifestation, of the invisible God. And that has never changed. That’s why in chapter 2 Paul goes on to say that Christ now is the Godhead in bodily form. So the Godhead is no longer an invisible Godhead. God the Father is still invisible. God the Spirit is invisible. But God the Son is that visible manifestation.

All right, now coming back to verse 17 of I Timothy chapter 1, this is what Paul is again alluding to. That the God who had been invisible is now personified in God the Son, but His Sovereignty has never been diminished. He is still the eternal King of Kings. He’s still the Lord of Lords, and He will exemplify that at His Second Coming. Reading on in verse 17:

I Timothy 1:17

“(Who is the image of the invisible God), the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” He’s immortal. He’s from eternity past, and He will go into eternity future. And again, coming back to the Godhead’s invisibleness, He’s “the only wise God, (Sovereign and to Him) be honour and glory for ever and ever.”
So, Paul probably gives us a better description of the Godhead than all the rest of Scripture put together. And never lose sight of the fact that the Deity of Christ is fundamental to our faith. If He wasn’t very, very God, He could have never taken the sins of the world upon Himself. This is what makes Christianity so unique, and it makes it so exclusive.

There isn’t another religion on the face of the earth that can make that kind of a claim. Buddha never claimed to die for the sins of the world. Muhammad couldn’t die for the sins of the world. Joseph Smith didn’t die for the sins of the world. You could go on to every other so-called religion on earth, and none of them can make this kind of a claim. But this is what’s basic to our faith. It is that God the Son, because He was totally God, was fully capable of taking upon Himself the sin debt, the sin punishment of the whole human race. That’s what makes our faith so unique and yet so believable. All right, now verse 18, we’ll move on and make a little headway.

_I Timothy 1:18a_

“The charge…” Now look at this carefully. Paul is now writing to someone quite a bit younger. He’s no longer an 18 year old. He is probably in his mid-thirties or forties by now. But he’s still, in Paul’s aged look-back—he’s still the young man in the faith. Look what he commits to this young man Timothy.

_I Timothy 1:18a_

“The charge (or this responsibility) I commit unto thee,…” Now remember, Paul is not in prison. He’s free. He has no idea how much longer he’s going to be on earth to minister. But he realizes that he has to start passing the responsibility to someone else. As my wife tells me over and over, you’ve got to learn to delegate. Well, that’s so true. You can’t do it all yourself. We have to delegate.

This is what Paul is beginning to do now. For the first time he is passing some of his responsibility—or as in the Old Testament case between Elijah and Elisha, what did Elijah pass on to Elisha? The mantle. Didn’t he? He passed it on and delegated his previous responsibility to the next one in line. Well, that’s basically what Paul is doing here to Timothy. He is passing the mantle, and he says:

_I Timothy 1:18_

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies….” Now here’s where we always have to be careful when we read the New Testament. The word prophecy in the New Testament does not mean telling the future like Daniel
and Isaiah did. They word prophecy in the New Testament usually, and I think almost without exception, simply means *speaking forth*. Speaking forth the Word of God.

Now again, if you’ll go back to this timeline, you can see that from the onset of the Apostle Paul’s ministry in about A.D. 40 up until at least A.D. 56 - 57, there are 15 or 16 years where there is no written Word. So, how did these little congregations scattered throughout the Roman Empire exist? How did they grow? By the spoken Word—by men with the gift of speaking the Word.

And that’s what I Corinthians 12 and 14 are all about. You have to understand these definitions, otherwise you’d think, well, Timothy must have been a prophet like Isaiah. No, he wasn’t. Timothy didn’t leave us any prophetic utterances about the future. But he was given this gift of speaking forth the Word, because that’s what he had received up until this time. All right, so Paul says:

*I Timothy 1:18*

*“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies (The speaking forth of these biblical truths without benefit of having been written.) which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest wage a good warfare;”*

Now just stop and think about that for a moment. Here this young man Timothy has been with Paul now over the last several years. He was probably one of Paul’s first converts in that first missionary journey up to Derbe and Lystra and so forth. And Paul has just been sort of nurturing him, teaching him, and giving him a little more responsibility all the time as he goes along.

But now, evidently realizing that his time on earth is certainly limited, Paul begins to get the young man ready to carry on the work of the Apostle Paul. So he again reminds him of the things that had been spoken to him before—that by those things that he had learned, they might help him to fight a good what? Warfare.

Now listen, the Christian life has never been a bed of roses for anybody. It is a constant warfare. Now let’s go back to Ephesians, again; as it’s been a long time since we were over there. And nothing has changed. You and I are in the same situation. As soon as you take a stand for the truth, you find yourself in warfare. You find yourself up against opposition.

You just can’t avoid it. Because you want to remember, the vast majority of the human race does not like the truth. They’d rather be fed a bunch of “milk-toast” and a bunch of stuff that goes down easy or as Paul says later in Timothy—“*with itching ears.*” They just want something that tickles their ears and makes them feel good.
And if ever we were in a time of that kind of Christianity, we’re in it today. A feel-good Christianity. All right, but that’s not the way it is. The real world is:

_Ephesians 6:12_

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but (We’re in a spiritual warfare. We do wrestle--) against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,(Not a pretty picture, is it? And we are--) against spiritual wickedness (Where?) in high places.”

Now you remember when I taught this, I said, we’re not talking about government as the high places. We’re talking about the ecclesiastical hierarchies—the seminaries and the denominational leadership, many times. And, oh, we’re seeing it constantly—how that these men are just apostatizing. They’re turning against the basic truths. All right, Paul warned us of it.

And then he starts in verse 13 with alluding to a Roman soldier. Now you all know that Romans were feared from one end of the then-known world to the other because their military power for that day and time was awesome. They were ruthless. So Paul uses that as analogy. The only way we can withstand the enemy of our day is the same way as he told Timothy—to be on guard and to be ready to take up the charge. Because we’re going to need the whole armor of God. We cannot go out there without a knowledge of the Scripture and make any inroads amongst the enemy.

_Ephesians 6:13_

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Then he goes through and he puts on all the armament of that Roman soldier and makes an allusion to things of the Spirit. So as believers, whether in your everyday work in the office or wherever you may be working, or whether it’s in a ministry of one sort or another, we are all in a warfare.

And he makes another allusion in one of his other letters. When a soldier went out to fight for the Roman government, did he take along all of his domestic responsibilities? Hardly. He had to leave all that behind. He just simply had to turn his back on his domestic responsibilities. He had but one purpose in life, and that was to fight for his government, for the Romans as pagan as they were. But nevertheless, that part has never changed. And it’s the same way with us. We are to be in a constant spiritual warfare against the enemy. And the only way we can wage it is to be skilled in the Word of God.
So always remember these things. This is why we admonish people on the program constantly – get into the Book. Don’t just sit and let it come in and think, oh, well, I’m prepared. No, you can’t be. You have to just simply get into the Word. Study it on your own. Be in it day in and day out. And then, of course, supplement it with a prayer life. And then, as a Roman soldier of old, we can be a soldier of Jesus Christ. It is not an easy road. Never does Paul imply that we are going to have a rose petal pathway. It is a constant, constant battle.
Good to see everybody in again. We’re going to pick up where we left off in the last program. That would be in I Timothy chapter 1 and verse 19. While you’re finding your place, we want to remind you we’re just an informal Bible study. That’s why we’re here, to see what the Scripture says. I’m always reminding you to also be aware of what the Scripture does not say. Because a lot of people are fed a bill of goods that is not in the Book.

I get a lot of phone calls telling us that their preacher or teacher taught things on Sunday that they weren’t sure about. The first thing I ask them, “Well, have you found it in your Bible?” “No. That’s why I’m calling.” “Well, if you can’t find it in your Bible, you’d better just chalk it up as a red flag, and you’d better be careful.”

So anyway, hopefully we can show clearly what the Bible says and what it doesn’t say and trust that hearts are blessed by it.

All right, now we’re going to go right into the next verse after our last program ended in verse 18—now verse 19. He’s still admonishing the young man Timothy. He is going to be picking up the mantle, so to speak, at least some time down the road. And along with waging a good warfare, in verse 19 he is to be:

I Timothy 1:19a

“Holding (What?) faith,…” You know that’s one of my favorite words. And if I get any flack at all—I don’t get much—but if I get a little flack, it’s because of my stand that it’s faith plus nothing!

And, oh, that’s so hard for some people to comprehend. But see, faith has always been the vehicle. Even back when the Lord killed the animals and provided the clothing and the righteousness for Adam and Eve, it was still based on their faith.

But for the next real clear evidence of faith as the vehicle for getting right with God, you have to go back to Cain and Abel. That’s where you get the first real picture of how faith is to operate. Now I always make the clear statement that Cain and Abel were not told to believe for their salvation that Christ died on a Roman Cross and that He was buried and that He rose from the dead, as we in the Body of Christ are told to believe.

There’s no way they could have believed something like that. The cross hadn’t even been invented as an execution. But when you get back as far as Cain and Abel, they
were to believe what God said to them. Now in order for the Scripture to define what I’m saying, come back with me to Romans. We’re going to look at the word faith—probably for the next whole half hour. Romans chapter 10 and verse 17, and it’s as plain as language can make it.

Romans 10:17

“This then faith (this word we’re going to be looking at) cometh by hearing, and hearing (comes) by (What?) the word of God.” All right, my definition for faith over the years that I’ve been on television has been real simple. It’s what? That’s right! Taking God at His Word. That’s what faith is. God said it, and He expects us to believe it. That’s faith.

Now granted, I don’t want someone to say—well, when you say it’s faith plus nothing, that means I can just sit down on a chair and trust that it’s going to hold me and that’s all I need. No! Now don’t be ridiculous. We’re talking about faith in what God has said concerning our spiritual need. And He said those things to the Apostle Paul for him to share with us in the Body of Christ!

In fact, come back to Romans chapter 3 verse 23. Now this is the Word of God. Yes, it came from the Apostle Paul. But Paul was the inspired writer, and it became, then, as Peter makes so plain in his epistle that Paul’s letters are Scripture. And Scripture is the what? The Word of God. All right, now the Word of God tells us in Romans 3:23 that:

Romans 3:23

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” Do you believe it? Well, you can’t be saved until you do. But see, there are multitudes of people who don’t believe that. You know why? They haven’t got the faith to accept the fact that this is God’s Word. So here’s where you have to begin. God says it, and we believe it because it’s His Word.

All right, now come with me all the way back to Genesis. It’s been a long time since we have taught anything concerning Cain and Abel. Come back to Genesis chapter 4. And we’re going to use the whole half hour just to look at these examples of faith and examples of no faith. Because see, the world’s problem has always been the lack of faith—or the word I’ve always used is unbelief.

Why have we got the problems in the world we’ve got today? Unbelief. They don’t believe what God said. Well, it already started in the Garden of Eden, because old Satan cast doubt when he was talking to Eve that—Did God really say that? But then
we come out a few years. Cain and Abel are now young men, and we get the best example of two perfectly human beings—much alike in many ways and yet different. And they both become, then, examples for us of faith and unbelief.

*Genesis 4:3a*

“And in the process of time…” Now I’m not a Hebrew scholar, but I’ve read more than once that the Hebrew implies that this process of time was a day of instruction.

In other words, God told these two young men what He expected and when. And that boiled down to when their conscience convicted them of sin, whatever it might be, they were to bring a blood sacrifice, and God would accept them. That’s what God evidently said. Now I have to use the word *evidently*, because it’s not explicit in here. But as we go along, it will certainly become evident. But God evidently said, now when you sin, bring me a blood sacrifice, and I will accept you.

*Genesis 4:3-5a*

“And in the process of time (Or after a time of instruction so that there was no doubt what God expected.) *Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.* 4. *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock* (Not something that grew out of the ground, but that which was a live animal and shed its blood.) *he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.* And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5. *But unto Cain and his offering* (Which was something which grew naturally—it was bloodless. It was lifeless.) *He had not respect…*” God did not respect that offering.

All right, now we flip all the way up to the Book of Hebrews. All the way up to Hebrews chapter 11, the great faith chapter—keeping in mind now these two young men. Cain brought a bloodless offering—which, of course, he had gained by the sweat of his face. It grew naturally out of the ground. In fact, I’ve told my Oklahoma classes a lot of times. I like to just picture a big bunch of beautiful orange-red carrots with nice green tops. Maybe he could have just made a beautiful offering. Now that’s just my imagination. I don’t know what he brought. But nevertheless, it was something that grew out of the ground. And beautiful as it was, it was lifeless. It was bloodless.

Abel, on the other hand, went to his flock and got the firstling, or the best, lamb he could find. And he brought it as a sacrifice. Now then, Hebrews 11 makes it so plain.

*Hebrews 11:4a*
“By faith (by taking God at His Word) Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,...” Now you have to kind of read between the lines. Cain brought that which grew out of the ground. It was bloodless. Abel brought a live sacrifice. A blood sacrifice. All right, so now then, if Abel brought the right sacrifice and he did it by faith, why did Cain bring a wrong sacrifice? No faith! The man didn’t believe a word God said.

Now, I don’t know how many of you have had people under your employ. I’m sure many of you have. You’ve given them explicit instructions on what you want them to do, and they don’t do it. Or they do it wrong. Do you just take that as another nice event in your life? Hardly. There’s nothing more irritating than to have given an order or an instruction to someone and have them do it wrong. What was their problem? Hey, they never listened to you. They never paid any attention to you.

Well, that was Cain. Whatever God told him concerning a sacrifice, Cain just let it go in one ear and out the other. And when it came time that he knew he had to get right with God, instead of bringing a blood sacrifice, Cain probably said, well, surely God knows how much sweat I’ve put into growing these things. Surely He will accept my offering even though it isn’t a lamb.

But God didn’t, and Cain got angry. But it wasn’t God’s fault. It was Cain’s unbelief. And because of his unbelief, he was rejected. Not because he was worse than Abel. It was just simply that he did not have faith, where Abel did. So Abel was accepted.

All right, let’s go back to the Old Testament once again. Let’s come all the way back to the account of Jacob and Esau. The most perfect example, again, of two young men, twins. In one respect they were probably alike in many areas. On the other hand, they were totally different. Jacob, of course, would rather be in the kitchen cooking, and Esau would rather be out in the field hunting.

But nevertheless, here we have two men, again, with whom God is going to deal with in this area of faith and unbelief. All right, in Genesis, I haven’t given you the chapter yet, have I? Chapter 25. Genesis chapter 25—a portion of Scripture you all know, probably as well or better than I do.

*Genesis 25:27*

“And the boys (Jacob and Esau) grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.” He was more, like I said, more attuned to working in the kitchen and cooking rather than being out hunting. All right, now verse 29:
Genesis 25:29-31

“And Jacob sod (or was making or was cooking) pottage (Today we’d just simply call it stew. He was cooking a bean soup.) and Esau came from the field, (Probably been out all day trudging through the woods and so forth, and he came in famished, hungry.) and he was faint: 30. And Esau said to Jacob, (his twin brother, remember) Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; (or stew) for I am faint: (I’m hungry.) therefore was his name called Edom. (Which is translated “red.” It was a red bean soup that Jacob was cooking.) 31. And Jacob said, (He was pretty coy, you know. And he says, all right, I’ll give you a bowl of soup for your birthright.) Sell me this day thy birthright.”

Now very few people understand that the birthright back here in the antiquities was a spiritual thing. The birthright had nothing to do with the physical or material wealth. The birthright was going to be associated with the Covenant made with their Grandfather Abraham. That through that man Abraham, and the off-spring coming down the road, would come the Messiah.

This is that whole idea of the birthright. That through that lineage of people would one day come the Redeemer, not only of Israel, but of the whole world. But it had to be appropriated how? By faith! They couldn’t see the whole thing. God didn’t lay it all out in a blueprint. They had to appropriate these things by taking God at His Word.

And that’s why Hebrews 11 is such a beautiful resume of these men of faith. Nothing was written. Nothing was drawn out. But whatever God had said, the Patriarchs believed it. It was their faith. All right, now coming back to this man Esau, then, he sees nothing to be gained from that spiritual birthright. And why not? No faith. Whatever God said didn’t mean anything to Esau. He couldn’t have cared less that there was a Messiah or a Redeemer coming one day. He’d rather fill his tummy with bean soup. And so what does he do? Verse 31:

Genesis 25:31-32

“And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” What a stupid question! Is it? Yes and no. To the man who understands what’s at stake, yes, it was stupid to imagine that he was turning his back on all the covenant promises that would be coming down the road.

But on the other hand, he had no concept of what this was. Why? Because he didn’t believe a thing God said. Whatever God may have said went in one ear and out the
other. Ring a bell? Hey, that’s most people today. They don’t care what this Bible says. But for those of us who do care, we can take it, and we can accept it as the Word of God. We believe it, and God reckons that faith, then, as righteousness. All right, now let’s move on a little bit more here before we leave Genesis. Verse 33:

**Genesis 25:33-34**

“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Isn’t that plain? Look at the world around you. Have they changed? Not a bit. Not a bit. They’ve got all the promises of forgiveness. They’ve got all the promises of redemption. All the promises of eternal life, eternal bliss, don’t mean anything to them, the masses, for the most part. Why not? They have no faith!

They don’t believe any of this. Consequently, they live the way they do. Now, let’s just turn over a little bit, and then we’re going to go back to Hebrews once again. Come all the way over to, oh, let’s see, I’ve got to look a minute. I wasn’t really going to do this. Turn to chapter 36 of Genesis. Now this is the genealogy of the people that would come from this man destitute of faith, Esau.

Esau—the perfect example of a man who had everything going for him, but because of his lack of faith, he ended up on the wrong road. All right, Genesis 36 verse 1 and the first thing you’re going to say is, ah, this is just a dry genealogy. No. Not really. Not really.

**Genesis 36:1-2a**

“Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. (Which means red. I mean, it follows him all the way through.) 2. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan;...” Now to the casual reader that says – so what? But what had God also instructed all of these people coming out of that Covenant Promise to Abraham concerning the Canaanites? Have nothing to do with them!

You’re not to marry the Canaanites. That’s why He sent Isaac clear up to Syria for his wife. All right, so why can Esau glibly go and marry Canaanite women? No faith! No faith. Now, if you want to know what the Canaanite women were like, you read Leviticus 18. That gives you a graphic picture of the behavior of the Canaanite people. And it was from those people that Esau had no trouble in identifying and taking wives. Not even one, but two.
But he doesn’t stop there. He goes on one step further. He also marries, goodness sakes, I’m not seeing it. He also marries a daughter of Ishmael. I’m looking right at it. I know I am, and I’m not seeing it. Yeah, okay verse 3.

*Genesis 36:3*

“And Bashemath Ishmael’s daughter,…” Now I’ll tell you. I can look at something and not see it. He also marries a daughter of Ishmael. So now here he is. He’s involved with three women, all of which are out of step with God’s promises. Why? No faith. Didn’t mean a thing to him what God said.

All right, now let’s follow up again going all the way back to Hebrews—to our same faith chapter. No, I’m going to go to chapter 12 on this one. Eleven is the faith chapter. But I’m going to go to Chapter 12. We’re going to follow up on this man destitute of faith, Esau.

*Hebrews 12:16*

“Lest there be any (What’s the word? Oh, we don’t even like to use it.) fornicator (What is that? An immoral person with no moral compass whatsoever. And that’s what Esau was. Now Paul writes—I trust he wrote Hebrews.) Lest there be any immoral, or profane person, as (Whom?) Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.” And why did he sell it? It was spiritual, and it meant nothing to him.

Since he was destitute of faith, he then became what kind of a person morally? Immoral. He had no compunction about going to those filthy, wicked, Canaanite people. And he took out not just two women, but three of those gals. And it all just showed his moral compass. And his moral compass was way off kilter, because he had no faith. Isn’t it amazing? No faith. And, oh, it is such a sad commentary of people who are the same way today. They are going on to their doom, eternally forever, simply because they will not take God at His Word.

When God tells us today in this Age of Grace that we must believe in that finished work of the cross (His death, burial, and resurrection ) in order to get to Heaven, as seen in I Corinthians 15:1-4, most just walk it underfoot. Not taking God at His Word has ruined nations. It has ruined individuals. And I’m afraid it’s going to ruin our beloved nation America. Because I’ve said it before, other men have said it—I’m not the only one. One day this nation is going to come down like no other nation in all of human history. You know why?
Because we have had so much of the Word of God. Churches on every corner. Bibles in every library. Probably in almost every home in America. And what are most of them doing? Gathering dust. Very few are taking anything of what this Book says and believing it. Consequently, we are a nation with tremendous responsibility. And to those responsible who have walked it underfoot, God deals sooner or later in judgment. He always has, and He will again.

All right, I’d like to use one more quick instance of a lack of faith. Come back with me to Numbers chapter, oh, I was going to say 14, but maybe I should look at a chapter a little sooner than that. No, let’s go to Numbers 14. That’ll be okay, Honey. Numbers 14 and, again, to make a quick, quick backdrop. Israel has come out of Egypt. They are now a Nation of People under Moses’ leadership. Aaron is the high priest. Just a few weeks before this, they have received the tabernacle. It’s all built and ready to function.

They’ve got the priesthood. Everything is ready to move on forward. God brings them up to the southern border of the Promised Land, or what we today call the Land of Israel. The Promised Land, whatever you want to call it. He told them to go in and take it. He would drive out the Canaanites in judgment because of their wickedness. He said, I’ll drive them out. I’ll use hornets or whatever else needs to be done. Just go in and occupy it. You won’t have to lift a sword. You won’t have to do any hard work. It’s all ready and waiting.

And look what happened. Oh, I guess I do have to drop back into chapter 13, Hon. Back into chapter 13 verse 27, the spies have now come back. And remember, the spies weren’t God’s idea, that was Israel’s. The twelve spies had come back, and they said in verse 27:

*Numbers 13:27b-29b*

“...We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. 29. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea,...” What are they saying? Hey, we can’t do it. We can’t take it.

*Numbers 13:32*

“And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a
land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.” We saw the giants! Had God told them to be afraid of any of that? No. But what was the result? Oh, the next chapter now:

**Numbers 14:1-2a**

“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. 2. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses…” Verse 3.

**Numbers 14:3**

“(And they said--) And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?” That’s not what God said would happen! God said all they had to do was walk in and occupy it. What was their problem? No faith! And Hebrews chapter 3 recaps it. And what does it tell us. Therefore God did not let them go into the Promised Land because of their what? Unbelief.

So the Nation missed all the promises of the land flowing with milk and honey.
LESSON THREE * PART III

BEING SHIPWRECKED SPIRITUALLY

I Timothy 1:17 – 2:2

Okay, good to have every body back in again. For those of you out in television, when I start every program that way, it’s simply because we dismissed them for a coffee break. And it’s not always easy to get them to stop visiting and get back in here for the next half hour. So there is a reason for my madness.

And for those of you out in television, we appreciate your letters, calls, and comments. I’m so blessed that out of all the communications we get, hardly ever do we get a letter that we don’t enjoy. I’ll admit, when they first asked me to do this on television that was my number one worry. Could I handle the flack of people who would get nasty and disagree? But the Lord has seen fit to protect us from that. We appreciate every letter that comes in. Oh, once in a while, you know, you go through and you have some trepidation and wonder if you’re going to get a bad one. But so far so good, you’ve been so gracious in your letter writing. And in your financial help, we just have to say thank you, thank you, thank you.

All right, we’re going to get right back in again and pick up our study where we left off. We were in I Timothy chapter 1. Jerry’s got it on the board. We’re going to finish verse 19 and go on into 20. And then from there, I don’t know. We’ll just see how far we get. But I Timothy again chapter 1, picking up where we left off.

I Timothy 1:19

“Holding faith, (You remember in our last program, we reviewed all the, or not all, but some of the men who were destitute of faith. I’m going to pursue that a little further because of verse 20. So now he tells Timothy--) Holding faith, (taking God at His Word) and a good conscience; (Which all works, of course, hand-in-glove.) which some (And we looked at some of those in our last program.) having put away concerning faith (In other words, they rejected what God said.) have made shipwreck:”

Well, you see, that’s exactly what happened to Esau, our example in our last program. When he refused to believe what God said, it caused him to go immoral. It caused him to, as we saw in Hebrews, he wept bitter tears—and all because he was destitute of faith. He became shipwrecked spiritually.
Well, we’re going to pursue this a little further. Even the Nation of Israel more than once—and we covered one of them in our last program—at Kadesh-barnea, when God said they could go in and take the Promised Land. It was all ready and waiting for them. But in unbelief they turned away and ended up shipwrecked spiritually out there in the wilderness. Well, now let’s go back and look at another instance before we look at the two gentlemen that Paul is dealing with. Let’s go back and look at the Nation of Israel at a later time—Christ’s first advent.

Come back with me, if you will, to chapter 2 of the Book of Acts. Acts chapter 2 verse 22. And remember that when Christ came, He came to the Nation of Israel to fulfill all the Old Testament covenants and promises. “He came unto His own, (John wrote.) and His own (What?) received Him not.” Why didn’t they? Unbelief. No faith!

What was their question? “Could anything good come out of Nazareth?” Well, why not, if God is in it? But see, their faith was so blind and so lacking that they, in spite of all of His signs and miracles and wonders, they still couldn’t admit that anything good could come out of Nazareth. They still couldn’t admit that He was the promised Messiah.

The Nation was steeped in unbelief. Oh, they were religious, don’t ever forget that. My, they were religious. They wouldn’t miss a Sabbath. They wouldn’t miss a feast day. They wouldn’t do anything contrary to the Law of their religion. But when it came to faith, they were destitute. Consequently, they crucified Him. He’s risen from the dead, and now Peter comes back to the Nation of Israel here in Acts chapter 2 verse 22, and he says:

Acts 2:22a

“Ye men of Israel, (He’s not talking to the Gentiles, yet. He’s talking to this Nation to whom Christ came and presented Himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.) hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth,…” And I’m sure he used the word Nazareth to complement the fact that they thought nothing good could come from there.

Acts 2:22b

“...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs,...” Isn’t that amazing? Miracles and wonders and signs. And for how long? Three years. Up and down those dusty roads of the land of Israel and yet they couldn’t come out of their unbelief.
Acts 2:22b-23

“…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, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, (Now look what Israel did with their promised Messiah because of unbelief. And he says--) ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:” Killed Him!!

All right, let’s go on to chapter 3 and verse 12, where Peter and John have now just healed the lame man, much the same way that Jesus did just a few months previously. Again, the Nation – why are they stupefied? Why are they alarmed at the healing of the lame man? No faith. They couldn’t believe that God was doing this.

Acts 3:12-13a

“And when Peter saw it, (That is the consternation of the Jews of his day.) he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; (Whom he called Jesus of Nazareth in chapter 2.) whom ye delivered up, and (What’s the next word?) denied…”

Why? Unbelief! They couldn’t believe that He was who He said He was. Isn’t that awful? In spite of all the signs and wonders and miracles, they could not believe that He was the promised Messiah. All right, reading on.

Acts 3:13b-15

“…whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he (Pilate) was determined to let him go. 14. But ye (the Nation) denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; (Now look at verse 15. This is graphic language. He says to the Nation of Israel--) And you (What?) killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.”

So, here Peter makes it so plain that the Nation of Israel had rejected Jesus of Nazareth, and had put Him to death by virtue of the crucifixion. Why? Unbelief! In fact, a verse just comes to mind. I Corinthians chapter 2 is where I think it is. Keep your hand in Acts. I’m not through there. I Corinthians chapter 2 dropping down to verse 7, where Paul is now writing to the Gentile congregation at Corinth. So this is directed primarily to us as well.
I Corinthians 2:7

“But (Paul says) we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:” In other words, the Apostle Paul wasn’t an accident. He says in Galatians that God by Grace separated him from his mother’s womb. He was a chosen vessel. All right, now verse 8.

I Corinthians 2:8a

“Which none of the princes of this world knew:…” Now who was he referring to? Well, the leadership of Israel, first and foremost, but also even the leadership of Rome. Now Pilate had an idea. He had a sneaking suspicion that this was somebody special, but he still carried it out.

Israel, on the other hand, didn’t have a clue as to who He was. The high priests, the religious leaders, thought he was nothing more than a blasphemer and an imposter and to get rid of Him was doing the God of Abraham a favor. And, of course, that was Saul of Tarsus’ idea. All right, so now Paul as the Apostle of the Gentiles can write:

I Corinthians 2:8

“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” Well, that’s common sense, isn’t it? If they would have known who they were putting on that Roman cross, they would have never dared to carry it out. But they didn’t know. And why didn’t they know. Unbelief.

They blinded their spiritual eyes as Esau of old. They were as blind to the truth as Israel at Kadesh-barnea. And over and over and we can’t just point the finger at the Jews. We’re no better. As I said in my last program, look at our nation today. We are a nation steeped in unbelief. Oh, our churches may be full—but our churches, for the most part, not all, of course, fortunately. But so many of them, as we’re going to see in the next part of Timothy, they’re denying the fundamentals of the faith. They’re denying this Book. But Israel is an example to us over and over that because of their unbelief they missed out on the blessings of their God.

All right, back to Acts, again, if you will, for just a moment. Only now come over to chapter 7 and we’ll start at verse 1. Where Stephen is full, it says in verse 8 of chapter 6, full of faith and power. Now remember the word faith—he had already taken God at His Word. Stephen had a full understanding of who Jesus was. And now he’s been brought before the high priests and the religious leaders of Israel.
Acts 7:1-2a

“When said the high priest, Are these things so? (In other words, the things he had said concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Now look at verse 2.) 2. And Stephen said, Men, brethren, and fathers,…” Now you know, when I taught the Book of Acts I was constantly emphasizing—who are we still dealing with? Israel. Israel, the Covenant People, the favored Nation. And there are no Gentiles in here yet. Stephen makes it so plain.

Acts 7:2-4

“When, brethren, and fathers, listen, The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, (Now Abraham is not the father of the Gentiles. He’s the father of the Jewish people.) when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran. 3. And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. 4. Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, (the land of Canaan) wherein ye now dwell.”

All right, now this is kind of rabbit chasing, I know. But keep your hand here in Acts for just a moment and turn over to Romans chapter 4 for a graphic comparison between people of unbelief and no faith, and this man Abraham who is the epitome of faith. This is why Abraham was the “friend of God.” He could believe what God said without question. And that’s what faith amounts to. All right, Romans chapter 4 verse 1. And I’m doing this just to show the direct opposite of unbelief and faith.

Romans 4:1-2

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, (That is the father of the Nation of Israel.) as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.” You know, we were in Minnesota a few weeks ago. And at the home where we were staying, I was waiting for a phone call. And as I was sitting there waiting for the phone to ring, there was their denominational paper. It doesn’t make any difference what denomination they were a part of.

And I started reading the article. It was just a one page article. And, my, how I wished I would have just asked if I could have brought it home. I read that article. I could have written it. No kidding! I could have written it. There wasn’t a word in there that I would have disagreed with, and it sounded like Les Feldick teaching faith plus nothing! In fact, I think he even used the term. It is faith plus nothing! And then he quoted a poll that he had recently read of the major denominations in America
today and what percentage of these various peoples believed that works were necessary for salvation.

I won’t name them, but he started with the one that had the smallest percentage—which was about 28%, if I remember correctly—that believed that works were part of salvation. Then he went to the next denomination—thirty-some percent. And then he went up to another one—forty-some percent. Another one—fifty-some percent. And then he went up to some of the cults, where it ended up at 100% who believed you had to work for salvation.

And he said, and he used the word, “I am aghast that so many American people who claim to be Christians will still say that you have to work for your salvation.” Now that wasn’t my denomination. It was one of the major protestant denominations. It was the denominational magazine. And I was thrilled. I mean, how can people read this and miss it? It was so plain. All right, that’s exactly where we’re coming from in Romans chapter 4. Read on in verse 3.

Roms 4:3a

“For what saith the scripture? (Not some theologian. Not some preacher. Not me. Not anybody else, but what does the Scripture say?) Abraham believed God,…” Now there’s a good example of what I said at the beginning of the first program. How many people will try to put something else in here besides “he believed”? Want me to give you a few that we hear every day? Abraham repented and got baptized. Doesn’t say that. Abraham spoke in tongues. Doesn’t say that. Abraham gave 90% of his income. Doesn’t say that. Abraham joined a local assembly. Doesn’t say that. And, oh, I could go on and on of what people think they have to do as a part of salvation. No, it doesn’t say that. That’s man’s idea. The Scripture says, and that’s what Paul is saying. What does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God plus NOTHING for his salvation.

Yes, as a result of his faith, then what did he do? He moved out. Of course he did. But his original getting right with God was based on his believing what God said. So, reading on in verse 3.

Roms 4:3

“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it (his believing) was counted unto him for (What?) righteousness.” The man was declared righteous without circumcision. That didn’t come until later. Without anything else except that he believed God. Now isn’t that beautiful? Simple and, oh, like somebody wrote the
other day—why does everybody muddy the water with all the extra stuff? Well, I don’t know. Except, of course, it’s the ploy of Satan to keep people from the truth.

**Romans 4:4**

“**Now to him that worketh** (Now remember all of your percentages? All these people that are saying they are working for their salvation, regardless of what group they were in, this verse hits them right between the eyes.) **is the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of (What?) debt.**”

And who are they putting in debt? God! And will God ever be in debt to a mortal being? Never! But that’s what they’re doing. They are saying—God you owe it to me because I’ve worked for it. No, He won’t have it. But it’s just the opposite. He says—I’ve done it all. I’m giving it to you as a free gift. All I ask you to do is believe it. But, oh, people can’t do that. They are destitute of faith as Esau himself.

All right, back to Acts chapter 7 again, if you will, for just a moment or two. Acts chapter 7 verse 51, Stephen is coming down to the end of his message, all directed to the Nation of Israel. He gives the whole history of the Nation in this chapter 7 beginning all the way back from Abraham. And now he comes up to verse—what’d I say? Yeah, okay. I thought I said 57, but 51, and he says to the Nation:

**Acts 7:51-52**

“**Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye.** (Go all the way back to Kadesh again. The instance I gave in the last program.) **52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:**” Stephen used the same language that Peter did.

**Acts 7:53-54**

“**Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. 54. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.**”

**Acts 7:57-58**

“**Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, 58. And cast him out of the city, and stoned him:**” Why? Unbelief. They couldn’t believe a word the man was trying to tell them. And the
Nation from this point on goes down until they finally end up in a total dispersion amongst every nation under heaven. All because of what? Unbelief.

Now, let me give you one more instance before we finish up the verse in I Timothy. Come back to Hebrews again, if you will, chapter 3. I’ve got to do this quickly, or I’m going to run out of time. Hebrews chapter 3, we’ve used this periodically over the years as the perfect example of unbelief. And, of course, it is the event at Kadesh-barnea. He comes down in Hebrews chapter 3 and, oh, goodness, verse 8. All got it? Where it says:

**Hebrews 3:8-10**

>“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, (In other words, when they had a chance to go in and take the Promised Land.) in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9. When your fathers (Now remember, Hebrews is written to the Nation of Israel.) tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.” Why not? No Faith! They can’t take God at His Word. Verse 12:

**Hebrews 3:12**

>“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” See, that’s what it does to people when they have no faith. They become godless. They become ungodly!

Now that doesn’t mean that they’re skid-row material, but they’re without God. They have no faith. All right, for sake of time come all the way over to the last part of the chapter, verses 18 and 19, still in chapter 3.

**Hebrews 3:18**

>“And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, (That is the Promised Land waiting for them.) but to them that believed not?” That was their problem. And you want to remember, just a few weeks before that they’d made the golden calf.

But that isn’t what God reminds them of. He doesn’t tell them about the immoral activity they went into around the golden calf. No. His controversy was their unbelief. Okay, now I’ve got two minutes to finish up the last part of I Timothy chapter 1 verse 20. We have two more examples from the pen of the Apostle of men who were destitute of faith. They were even involved in a local congregation. And
they were giving Paul heartache with their false teaching. All right, back to I Timothy chapter 1 verse 20, of those who had been made shipwrecked Paul says:

_I Timothy 1:20_

“Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.” All right, now let’s turn a couple of pages to II Timothy chapter 2 verses 17 and 18. Then I guess we’re going to have to close it.

_II Timothy 2:16-18_

“But (he writes) shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. (Don’t forget Esau) 17. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; (And he also mentioned Alexander in I Timothy. Now here was their lack of faith.) 18. Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; (In other words, they denied the resurrection of Christ and consequently, what did they do? They destroyed or--) and overthrow the faith of some.”

How did they destroy some of their fellow church members’ faith? By teaching that there was no such thing as a resurrection to be looking forward to. They said that was something that happened in the past. Ring a bell? Hey, you’re hearing the same thing today.
LESSON THREE * PART IV

BEING SHIPWRECKED SPIRITUALLY

I Timothy 1:17 – 2:2

Okay, it’s good to have everybody in. We’re ready to begin the last lesson for the afternoon. Then we’ll be heading for home. So let’s be turning to I Timothy chapter 2 and verse one.

And again, we’d like to welcome our television audience. We realize that every day we pick up new listeners, and we always like to let you know that we’re not associated with anybody. You know, that’s one of the questions we get. Does somebody underwrite you? Or, how do you pay for your program, and so forth?

We’re not underwritten. We’re not associated with anyone. We are as free as a bird. All I have to respond to is the Lord Himself. We rely totally on the gifts of God’s people, and He’s always provided. We don’t foolishly go head-over-heels in debt, but we try to keep our bills paid. And as the funds become available, we reach out to more and more stations. It’s getting to the place where we’re reaching more and more people. And we appreciate the prayers and the letters, as well as you financial help.

All right, let’s move on. This is a Bible study. We go verse-by-verse most of the time, and we are now in I Timothy chapter 2 verse 1, where he says:

I Timothy 2:1a

“I exhort therefore,…” And whenever Paul uses the word therefore, what do you do? Well, you go back and remember what he’d been talking about. I think the main thing that he has in this therefore is the faith that we’ve been talking about in the last two verses of chapter 1. So because of our faith, because we are people who believe what God says, we are now in a position to make:

I Timothy 2:1b

“…supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, (Not just for ourselves, but for whom?) be made for all men;” In other words, we have a prayer responsibility way beyond our immediate circle of friends and family and so forth.

Now whenever I speak on prayer, I always like to remind people and we do. Whenever someone says, “Well, I just don’t know how to pray.” I want to bring you back a moment to Philippians chapter 4 verses 6 and 7, which are my two favorite verses when it comes to prayer. Whether it’s for all men as he says here in verse 1, or whether it’s for the kings and our men in high places, or our friends and loved ones, that is beside the point. When we pray, this should be our approach to the Almighty.
Philippians 4:6a

“Be careful (or concerned, or you might even say worry) for nothing; but in every thing (See, now that’s not qualifying. That means what it says. Everything – whether it’s physical, material, or spiritual.) by prayer and supplication (But here’s the secret.) with (What?) thanksgiving…” I still think that that is the secret to a successful Christian life. It is to be a man or woman or a boy or a girl that’s full of praise and thanksgiving to God. I think God revels in our response in thanksgiving.

Philippians 4:6b

“...in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Now I imagine that if there’s anything that throws a curve at a lot of us, and I’ll include myself as well—if God is Sovereign and He’s all knowing, and He knows the end from the beginning, why should we pray?

Well now, that’s a tough one to answer. We’re not going to change God’s mind. I don’t believe that we can do that. The only way I can answer this is that God in His foreknowledge and in His Sovereignty knows who we’re going to pray for so things all fall in place accordingly. In other words, if you would never pray, things probably wouldn’t happen the way they do. And that’s the only way I can look at it. We’re not going to change God’s mind. We’re not telling Him how to run His business. But on the other hand, we have this constant admonition to pray and let our requests be made known unto God. And He’s going to handle it according to His Sovereign design.

That’s as far as I can go with it. I’m convinced that you can’t twist His arm, and you can’t finagle something out of God just by virtue of your smooth talk. But the Scripture over and over—here we’ve already got two instances where Paul not only tells Timothy, but he writes to the Philippians that in everything we make our requests known unto God.

Well, what does that mean? You verbalize them. You tell Him. You don’t just assume that God knows what you need. We are to verbalize it. That’s what prayer is all about. All right, now this is an interesting verse coming up then. “...let your requests be made known unto God.” And then verse 7 and some of you have heard me teach this more than once. Whether God answers yes, no, or maybe later, the answer is in verse 7. Every prayer that you’ve prayed is already answered in verse 7. And what is that answer?

Philippians 4:7
“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds (How?) through Christ Jesus.” And why is everything put on Christ Jesus?

Well, I was going to use it a little later in Timothy, but I think this is probably as good a time as any. Go all the way back to the Book of Revelation. This is just an example of why everything rests on what Christ has done there at the cross. And I think this holds true for everything that we pray for and everything that God does on our behalf. And here’s the reason.

Revelation 5:9

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy (Now who is the thou? The Lord Jesus. God the Son up there in verse 5.) to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: (And here’s what makes Him worthy of everything—not just this little instance of Revelation, but of everything.) for thou wast slain, (His death on the cross) and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood (The work of the cross is what makes Him worthy!) out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nations;” and so on and so forth.

That’s why we can go to the Lord with every request possible. He is capable and worthy to do whatever He deems best for us. It is because of what He has already accomplished and who He is. He is the God of Glory. He’s the God of Creation. He’s Sovereign. He’s in total control. Total power, as we’re going to see in the next few moments as we move on in Timothy.

All right, but back to verse 7 in Philippians 4—that no matter how you pray, whatever you ask for, whether God does not do as you request or whether he may say later, or whether He answers in your own timeframe:

Philippians 4:7a

“And the peace of God,…” Now, you know what that is? That’s something that the world in general knows nothing of. The peace of God. Now what does that tell you? That if you’ve been praying for a loved one to get well, and God doesn’t answer that request, and He takes that loved one. Now what does that mean? That means that because of what Christ has already done, because of who He is, we don’t have to fall all apart. We have the peace of God that even though that loved one has been taken from our midst; we have all that we need.

Now that doesn’t mean that we don’t sorrow. That doesn’t mean that if you lose a loved one you’re not going to shed tears and you’re not going to be lost without them. But you don’t fall apart. God sustains us.
Philippians 4:7

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

All right, along that same line let me come all the way back to Romans. Because like I said in an earlier program, you know, the more Scripture we can base our thinking on the more solid our faith. Romans chapter 5 and verse 1 starts out, again, with one of Paul's favorite words. What is it? “Therefore.” Because of all that he has just said in chapter 4. And we used this chapter a couple of programs back. The faith of Abraham—how that by faith plus nothing God was able to declare him righteous.

Romans 5:1

“Therefore being justified by (What?) faith, (plus nothing! Now it doesn’t say that. I’m saying that. I’m just showing that there’s nothing added to it.) we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now what have we got? Peace. God-given peace! We don’t have to fret and wonder—am I going to make it? Have I done enough? Am I trying hard enough?

We were just talking at break time. I don’t want anyone to ever feel that just because we’re justified by faith, that’s as far as we have to go. Oh, no way! In fact, I’ll go to Ephesians now. We were talking about it at break time. But nevertheless, let’s finish this verse, and then we’ll go to Ephesians chapter 2.

Romans 5:1

“Therefore being justified by faith (plus nothing) we have peace with God (And again, through the work of what person?) through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Same language that he used in Philippians 4:6 and 7. We have that transcending peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All right, now come back to Ephesians 2 before I forget it. Ephesians 2:8, 9, and 10. I was going to use it in the previous program, and I ran out of time. So I guess it’s intended that I use it now.

Ephesians 2:8a

“For by grace are ye saved through faith;…” That is God’s unmerited favor toward us—which means we didn’t have anything going for us and couldn’t make it without God’s help. So by His unmerited favor you are saved through faith. Plus some
works? No. Come on. Your Bible is just as plain as mine. You’re saved by God’s grace through what? Faith—which is taking God at His Word.

Well, what do I take at His Word? That He died for my sin and yours. His Blood was shed. He arose from the dead. And we believe it for salvation. And the moment we believe it, God moves in.

In fact, I had an interesting letter the other day. I haven’t answered it, yet. And I don’t know as I will, especially since I’m doing it here on the program. Because I know the gentleman listens.

He was wondering what came first – justification or forgiveness or redemption? And of course, he had all the Scripture verses. He’d put a lot of work into it, I could tell that. Well, if I were to write him in one sentence, you know what I’d tell him? Hey, it all happened instantly! It didn’t come in a sequence of events. God didn’t first forgive you, and then come back and say I’ll justify you, and then come back and say, well, you’re redeemed. That was a one-second transaction! The moment we believed with heart-faith, God did all of that. Instantly! It’s all done. All right, so we’re been saved through faith, verse 8 reading on.

Ephesians 2:8b

“…and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” Well, goodness sakes, I don’t have to tell you. How much work do you do for a gift? Nothing. Somebody doesn’t say, well, I’ll give you a diamond ring IF you do this. Someone doesn’t say, well, I’ll give you something or other IF you do this. Then it’s not a gift. A gift is that which comes totally without merit.

All right, so salvation is by God’s Grace through faith in what He has said. It’s not of anything that we can do, because it’s the gift of God. Now look at the next verse.

Ephesians 2:9

“Not of works, lest any man should boast.” What’s works? Anything that you can do by making up your mind to do something. I don’t care what it is.

I’ve made reference to this once before years and years ago. When Iris and I were young, we used to check out books from the library. She’d read one, and I’d read the other, and then we’d switch, and so forth. Before the kids came along, you know, and we weren’t just covered up with all the activity. We read a lot more than we have time for today. But one of the little books we read was about a little fellow up in the Ozarks. He was getting to be about 14 or 15, and one day it came into his mind that
he’d been kind of an ornery little rascal, but he thought he was going to please his Mom and his Dad. So he told his little buddy, he said, “I think next Sunday I’m going to (You remember it, Honey?) next Sunday I’m going to go up and join the church.”

Sound familiar. Sure it does. But you see, what was the little fellow doing? Works! He made up his own mind and told his friend what he was going to do. That’s works. And that’s not faith. Now, his intensions were good. I’ll bet his Mama was thrilled to death in the story. But that’s what I’m talking about. That’s works—when you can make up your mind and say, well, I’m going to do this, or I’m going to do that. I don’t care what it is—then it’s a works. And it does not count for eternity.

All right, now verse 10, here’s where we move on AFTER the Lord has saved us. After we’ve gained peace with God. AFTER we’re forgiven and we’re redeemed and we’re justified. Now what do we do? Hey, we get to work! We get to work.

Ephesians 2:10a

“For we are his workmanship,…” Now the Greek word here is poema—from which we get the word poem—from which we also get the word a little further down the way—symphony.

In other words, something that has been beautifully and artistically put together—that’s what we are as believers. God has formed us and has given us particular gifts and abilities and talents for a particular use. And that’s what we’re to do. We’re to use it. Everybody has a different ability, but they all work together to be just like a symphony. So we are His workmanship. We are something that He has now put together. We have been created as a new creature in Christ – for what purpose? Good works! Of course, good works.

Ephesians 2:10b

“…created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

In other words, we live to serve. And it’s not for salvation, but it is for what? Reward. Now, I wasn’t going to do this. But here’s why I don’t get very far, Jerry. I thought I was going to finish I Timothy today. But see, that’s why I don’t get as far as I think I’m going to. Come back to I Corinthians chapter 3. Now that we’re talking about good works, we’d better pursue it a little bit. Because, hey, we’re human. And whenever we start doing something that is not for salvation, now we’re starting to do it simply because we’re doing good works. Being human, what’s our question? What am I going to get? And there’s nothing wrong with that.
You remember when Jesus was dealing with the Twelve, and they were about at the end of His three years, and they came down toward Jerusalem, and Peter said, now, Lord, we have followed you ever since you picked us up, up there at Galilee. What are we going to have therefore? Remember that verse in Matthew 19? What will we have therefore? Well, did the Lord scold him for worrying about what he’d get because of his good works? No! He says, Peter you’re going to rule one of the twelve Tribes of Israel when I come into my Kingdom. So, it’s a logical question.

Now for us today, we are created for good works. We get out. We get busy. What are we going to get? Well, I Corinthians 3—drop down to verse 11, Honey. All got it? For he says:

**I Corinthians 3:11**

“For other foundation (Other than Jesus Christ which Paul lays as the foundation of this Age of Grace.) **can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**” In other words, upon that finished work of the cross we’ve entered into a building process of works—on that finished work appropriated by our faith. Now look what happens. In verse 12, as a believer, God gives us a series of building materials with which we labor and put into the building on that foundation.

**I Corinthians 3:12**

“Now if any man build upon this foundation (as a believer) **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble;**” Six materials. Three of which can never burn. Three of which go up in a puff of smoke.

**I Corinthians 3:13a**

“Every man’s work (As a believer, we’re not talking about the lost here. We’re talking about believers.) **shall be made manifest:** (going to be put in the spotlight) **for the day...**” The judgment day, the Bema Seat day. Not the White Throne Judgment for lost people, but the judgment of the Bema Seat for believers. We pick that up in II Corinthians 5. All right, the day when we’ll stand before the Lord Jesus as the judge of our Christian life.

**I Corinthians 3:13b**

“...the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed (or tested) by fire; and the fire shall test every man’s work of what sort it is.” Now you’ve got to stop there a little bit and pick this apart. You go back to the Book of Revelation—what are the eyes of Jesus likened unto? Eyes of fire.
All right, now these eyes of fire are going to examine the works of the believer. He’s going to look at what we have built in our little section of the wall on that foundation, which is Christ Jesus. All right, now here we’ve been building throughout our whole Christian life with good works. But some of those good works are going to go up in a puff of smoke. They’re nothing more than wood, hay, and stubble. Some are going to remain, because they were comprised of gold, silver, and precious stones. See the analogy? Now what’s it all based on? Motive—why do we do the things we do?

You can be the best worker that anybody can imagine, and if you’re just doing it to elevate the self, forget it. It’s a puff of smoke. If you’re doing it to bring honor and glory to the Lord; if you’re doing it to enhance fellow believers, it’s gold, silver, and precious stones. That’s what it’s going to be. All right, now let’s move on. Verse 14:

I Corinthians 3:14a

“If any man’s work abide,…” If it survives those fiery eyes, it’s gold, silver, or precious stones. Now remember, what does fire do to those three elements? It purifies them and takes away all the dirt and the dust and the dross. It purifies them. So, the Lord Jesus will look at the works of believers whose motives are right, and they’ve been doing it for—not self—but for others.

I Corinthians 3:14b

...which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.” Now I know a lot of people don’t like that. They say, oh, you don’t dare talk about reward. Why not? This Book does.

Paul uses the analogy of the Olympic runners. And we’re to be like them up to a point. How? My, they trained and they worked and they prepared for the race. And why did they run the race? To gain the crown—which was only a wreath in those days. It wasn’t even a gold medal. But the analogy was that they went through all that period of training and training to run the race with all that was in them, to receive the reward. And that’s what we’re to do. We’re not saved to sit. We’re saved to serve.

Regardless of what you are. And when older people come and say, “Well, Les, I can’t do anything anymore.” Oh, yes, you can! Do you know that back in London’s darkest days, when London was about to be submerged in the most iniquitous generation that you could imagine, two elderly ladies were responsible for turning London right side up?
How’d they do it? Prayer. They prayed and they prayed. They prayed and revival hit London. So don’t ever say—I’m too old to serve. You can always pray. All right, let’s go on. Verse 15:

I Corinthians 3:15

“If any man’s work shall be burned, (It’s nothing but hay, wood, and stubble. Now these are believers, and they’ve got works that amount to nothing but wood, hay, and stubble.) he shall suffer loss: (not his salvation, but reward) but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

In other words, it’s going to be a slim escape so far as rewards are concerned. There’s the admonition. We’re saved by faith plus nothing because of the finished work of the cross and the Grace of God. But then we get busy and we serve. All right, now let’s come back to I Timothy chapter 2 and maybe I can finish one verse!

I Timothy2:1-2

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; (But now we don’t just stop for the mundane men around us, our friends and neighbors, but our prayers are to extend to our men in high places. For us today it’s presidents, senators, and congressmen.) 2. For kings, for all that are in authority; (Now believe it or not, why do we pray for our men in high places? For our own good! There is a bit of selfishness here. We are to pray for these men so that--) that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

Isn’t that amazing? There’s nothing wrong to pray for that. God doesn’t want us to just grovel in abject poverty and under the heavy boot of some foreign power. God wants us to live quiet and peaceable lives. And we’re to pray to that end.

That’s what government is for. Government is to—and I imagine this is where our founding fathers got the term that we are in the pursuit of what? Happiness. That’s our God-given right—the pursuit of happiness. And I was telling one of my classes the other night. You know, if you know anything of human history, very few percent of the population of the world down through history have enjoyed that.