***Living by Grace, No. 2

Colossians 1:3-8

COL-062***

Our subject is "Thanksgiving for the Colossians," segment number 40 in Colossians 1:3-8.

You may remember that there is one long Greek sentence here at the beginning of the book of Colossians. It began with verse 3, and it is now about to conclude with verse 8, and God willing, we'll do that this morning. Paul has, in this sentence, been expressing his thanksgiving for the positive volition response of the Colossian Christians to doctrine. The Colossian believers centered their faith in Jesus Christ, and had a great mental attitude love for all believers with whom they would spend eternity in heaven. And it pleased Paul that they were aware of the fact that that was their destiny, and that they should act like people in heaven. They should not act like people who are going to end up in the lake of fire forever. That's one of the great sadnesses of the Christian life – that we have this sin nature in us, drawing us to act like the people who are going to spend eternity in hell, instead of living now like the people who are going to spend eternity in heaven. The Colossians had centered their faith in Jesus Christ. They had a great mental attitude love for all believers, consequently, that they were going to spend eternity with. This was their family, and they knew it.

Furthermore, the Colossians had believed the gospel of the grace of God, which bore the fruit constantly of more saved people, and was spreading out throughout the world as it had in Colossae. The Colossians understood the doctrine of God's grace in dealing with all mankind. So, we have been trying to capitalize on this particular doctrine, making as clear as we could what the grace of God consists of – what it means to live by the grace of God. This is a comparatively unknown topic among Christians almost everywhere. These people in Colossae, however, came out of gross paganism into the light of the Word of God, and they knew it wasn't because of anything that they had done.

They knew it was the work of God upon them. They came to a deep grasp consequently of the reality of God's grace in living a godly lifestyle. They resisted the false teachers, which cropped up in Colossae as always was the case where the Word of God has gone. These people substituted human good works and legalisms as the means for maximum blessing and godliness. The truth of grace is the most important and yet the most neglected doctrine in the church today. Reason for this is that grace gives God all the credit and all the glory and man gets nothing, but the nature of man wants to operate on the basis where he has given credit and he has given commendation for what he is and what he accomplishes. Now this may not be a big issue with you because you don't perhaps move in that kind of a circle. But I get the reports all the time from people who do move into in circles of churches where the Word of God is not viewed as the inspired inherent authority of God where people do not look upon the Word of God as the sole authority and that it is binding upon us and that it is not to be compromised by being adjusted by human reason of the 20th century wisdom and consequently, those people are outraged when somebody stands up and says You're wrong in what you have concluded.

The Word of God is what is right, and of course these people act in all sincerity, but they cannot get away from the arrogance of the sin nature. The issue of what we're talking about and what Paul has been pleased with relative to these Colossian Christians is the issue of holiness, personal holiness, and if you haven't awakened each day with the concept, how will I be holy this day? Then it is obvious that you're not too mature as a Christian. Because without holiness you're going to become victimized by Satan. You will sooner or later succumb to the sin nature. I appreciate the encouragement that many of you have given the last few weeks because I agree with you that they have been probably the most significant series of instructions which we have given because we've been dealing with grace and we've been dealing with the grace system of spiritual perception and that last Sunday's climactic tie up hit at home and everybody was sober and everybody who was there knows now how to live the Christian life, not to be victimized, not to be an arrogant snob, but to be a Christian who in humility is in subjection to what God has to say. But what God has to say is a technique that you must learn.

**Holiness**

The issue is holiness. Why was this important to Paul? Because out of holiness came this great expression of Christian love that he will now pick up when we go to Colossians 1:9. And why is the Christian love so significant? Because out of Christian love, that agape kindness, putting yourself out for other people, putting the Lord first. Eyes on the Lord. Glory to him. That agape love is what accomplishes the great works of God, the great service, and a part of Christians. Paul was glad that they were godly people, but the issue was that that meant that they were out there fighting in the angelic conflict and being winners. One of the great problems of the Christian life occupational hazard is someday you're going to do something. You have a dream. Well indeed, if you don't have a dream, how you're going to have a dream come true. But that wasn't the way with the believers in the New Testament times. They all had great dreams of what they would like to do someday for God, but their focus was on right now what they were doing in the immediate presence. What else do you think was in the mind of that poor widow who went with her two little copper coins and dropped it in the treasury because that's all she had. Because she said there was a need now. There was something to do now, and she quit thinking about the future. I think it is time for Christians to do less talk about what they're going to do someday. I think you should be more embarrassed all the time about talking about what I'm going to do someday when things line up for me. Just don't even talk about it. Just go mum on it. Just go dumb on it because you're not going to do it. If you're not functioning now in the presence with the enormous means that you have very well, you're not going to do it in the future, so you should not deceive yourself.

You should not try to deceive God and you should not think that you're going to deceive mature Christians who know better. This business of holiness, this business of godliness, this business of loving God with all my heart, with all my soul, with all the being that I have and putting him first. That's a rarity. That's a rarity. But it comes as a result of what you've learned the last few weeks. Those were superb sermons. They were right on target and if you follow them carefully, you're going to find that you look back from eternity and you're going to thank God that those few Sundays were there for your grasp. Verse seven, Colossians 1:7. We begin with the communicator of grace "Just as you learned it from Epaphras," the teacher who has come from the city of Colossae. This word just as looks like this in the Greek Bible, "kathos" (kath-oce'), K A T H O S. This is a word of comparison. In Colossians 1:6, the apostle Paul has commended the Colossian Christians for their grasp of the reality of God's grace. They knew what the grace of God was. They weren't little legalists. They weren't little self-arrogant snobs, self-righteous crowd who were shot through with mental attitude sins but made a lot of the external sins of others. They understood what the grace of God was internally. This grace pertained on the one hand the salvation and they understood salvation as the appropriation of a gift from God, the father of eternal life in heaven. And when it's a gift to be appropriated, there's total absence of all human effort. Secondly, they understood this grace as it pertains to living the Christian life under the filling of the Holy Spirit and the building of a spiritual maturity structure in the soul through the knowledge of doctrine.

**Epaphras**

That kind of development into Christian holiness is also totally devoid a human effort and a human good works. This is a work of God both in saving you and in sanctifying you. This is the third time now that this particular little Greek word is used here in this long Greek sentence that we've been going through. We have it in verse six which has come to you. He's speaking about the gospel of the grace of God "Which has come to you just as there's the "kathos" the first time in all the world. Also, it is constantly "bearing fruit and increasing even as," there it is a second time "kathos" again "as it has been doing in you also since the day that you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth." And now the third time in verse seven, "just as you learned it from Epaphras."

So, he is trying with this just as this kathos word he is tying together the fact that these people in Colossae came acquainted with the most magnificent piece of information a human mind can receive how to go to heaven on the basis of a gift from God. And that gift of salvation through grace has been working throughout all the world bearing fruit spreading just as it did for them in Colossae and it is doing that just as Epaphras had told them it would do. They learned from him. Paul is with this word in fact going to connect himself and his grace teachings with that of the Colossian teacher Epaphras. The instruction was one and the same. The doctrine of grace is something that a Christian has to learn. He has to learn it from the Holy Spirit. He has to learn it from a teacher of doctrine, it is an unnatural quality.

When people put together a system of religion, they never base it on a gift. They always base it on merit. They always base it on something that you earn. Something you deserve. And therefore they fall into the trap of thinking that salvation is a matter of making some kind of promises to God of what they will do if He will do his part. Salvation is an appropriation. It is not some kind of a commitment. It is plain grace all the way. Now the false teachers in Colossae were teaching anti grace legalisms, which are Satan's lies. This was their way of saying here's how you'd make it with God. Here's how heaven is available. Here's how the good life on earth can be reached. So what we're saying, first of all, Paul says what they learned from Epaphras was that the modus operandi of God is grace, all the way from salvation to rewards for service and to godly living. And it is extended to you, and you can take it or leave it. Revelation 22:17, put it this way, "And the Spirit and the bride Christ say, come and let the one who hears say come and let the one who is thirsty come let the one who wishes take the water of life without cause." It is appropriation all the way. Grace is the modus operandi. If you do not deal with God on a grace basis, I can tell you you're not dealing with him at all.

**Receiving Instruction**

Colossians 1:7, "For just as you learned it referring to the grace of God." The word learned looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the word "manthano" (man-than'-o), M A N T H A N O. And by the way, consider yourself fortunate and honored that you are here today. I'm always amazed the things that kept cropping up the last few Sundays as somebody coming up to me and saying, boy, you are talking to so-and-so usually somebody of some significance to the person and don't you know that person is not here? I say, yep, that's how it is. I can always tell you that the person who most needs to hear a doctrine is going to be off visiting uncle useless somewhere or doing something else but not going to be here where the issue is at stake. So you're here because the grace of God has overridden everything in your sin nature and all the disorientation of the world around you. And we're glad you made it. These people in Colossae were very fortunate that they had this man Epaphras. "Manthano" is a word for receiving instruction from someone about something.

These Colossians got understanding of the grace of God and its functioning in the church age. It came from someone who taught them, someone who is a teacher in the know. Someone who understood the grace system for perceiving, for grasping spiritual truths. And a system which was not open to the unsaved. The grace system of perception is not open to the unsaved. So when all the people of the world who are in places of public importance start talking about religious things, just burst out laughing. These idiots who have a public forum do not understand anything about the grace of God and therefore they don't know anything about God. Because they can't understand the things of God. You have to begin by being a born-again person and then you have to be a person who's had a couple of years of good solid instruction in doctrine before you begin to click and begin to bring things together and you begin to functioning as a member of the royal family. The Colossians received an understanding of grace.

It was not natural to them. This word in the grammar is in the Aorist tense, which means at any point in time when the church met for worship, for instruction and doctrine, these Colossians were there and that's why they got to know these things. It is Active voice which tells us that these believers chose to be present in the local church meeting for instruction doctrine. They were here. They got here on time. They got here before the service. I still dream about a time in my ministry when I can walk in, and everybody is there when the doxology is sung. What an honor, what a respectful way to treat God. But that's crazy, isn't it? You respect, you treat your employer that way, but you don't treat God that way. You don't. You drag in whenever it's comfortable and convenient for you. But whatever you do, it's yours.

This active voice says you did it, you chose it and that's the way you're doing it. It's Indicative in its mood, which is a statement of fact. Teaching doctrine to believers is the primary biblical function of the local church and I hope that that is well established here in the Berean context. We're always having people who want us to drift off into programs. Programs to meet social needs of one kind and another for people. Programs of entertainment. Programs whatever happens to come up at that particular point in history. But Acts 2:42 makes it clear what the local church is all about. "And the Christians were continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching." There are other things, but the first and foremost notice in this verse of all that the Christians do in a local church when they gather for church service is to learn the Word of God. Now, to do that, the apostle doctrine, which we have recorded in Scripture, takes a school room setting. You have to be quiet. People around you have to be quiet. People around you not to disturb you. You have to be able to concentrate, you have to come rested enough so that you are capable. If you set up watching TV till two o'clock in the morning, I guarantee you come in here this nice, peaceful, quiet, refreshing, cool room, you're going to fall asleep even in the presence of my scintillating personality.

You can't fight the TV blues and drags. But you have to have a quiet situation. That's why we respect each other's privacy, and we respect each other's priesthood, and we don't interfere with each other to be able to learn. We don't create noise and disturbances around us. Because our primary function is what? So you learn something of the Word of God and that means you concentrate. That doesn't mean that your head is spinning around looking around seeing what dress so and so is wearing and what kind of an appearance somebody has, what kind of a haircut Mr. Holt has today and all that stuff that's so important in life. Your head is not swiveling. Sometimes I look at people out in the congregation and, you know that girl in the Exorcist who is whirling her head turned 360 degrees? They could qualify for that. They got a head that's constantly circling around observing. Sometimes I wonder if they're seeing the angels. Acts 2:42. The first thing in line is we're a local church. We teach you the word of doctrine. Hebrews 10:25, adds this significant point to that, "Not for seeking our own, assembling together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day dawning near." When you are not attending Sunday evening service and you could, that's a sin right here and be sure at least to confess it. Get back on track. Be sure you confess it to get back on track. Don't let that hang because it will bring you down. Is this important in a local church,

One of our people recently came head shaking, report on a very large church and the church meeting, big time operation. It began, I was told with 10 minutes of people standing solid, solid, start the service for 10 minutes. During which time they sang hymns announcement were made, a Scripture was read for 10 minutes at the beginning of service they stood then for 35 minutes continuously, the choir sang. Now those are strong voices. Some of us good singers can hardly manage five verses, but those were strong voices, and the people must have had strong ears, 35, 40 minutes of choir singing and then came to highlight the biblical purpose of gathering and the pastor stood up and talked for 20 minutes and that was it.

Now in 20 minutes you can hardly lay the groundwork to set up a corridor for people to enter into the deep things of the spirit of God. You can hardly find the channel to enter the deep waters of doctrine in 20 minutes. It takes a lot of preparation and a lot of setup time before you're ready to jump off into the deep things of the Spirit of God. But that is what is magnificent. That is what is your right. That is where your authority is to come from for living your life with great confidence. It is what you receive in the preaching instruction. 20 minutes and I can almost guarantee you there was a lot of inspiration and a lot of challenge. What a travesty. Instead of people going out awed because they'd been in the depths of the things of the Word of God. Some of you scuba divers have been to Cozumel, and you've taken the dive to Santa Rosa's wall. San Rosa's wall is, I think it's about 80 feet deep so it's a deep dive. And you come to an edge of a cliff and the edge of that cliff just simply drops off and the water plunges to depths behind anything you can see because that's clear water there and the color changes. And you cannot help but gasp as you come over that and look over the edge. One time only did I have the nerve to go out off the cliff over into the abyss below and look down. Sometimes there are occurrence I can pull you down and I being chicken livered by heart, by nature scooted back across very quickly after a minute or so back to the safety of being over the cliff. But one thing when we hit the surface, we knew that we had been in the depths of a magnificent experience.

Now if you don't have that when you leave church and if you don't have that in your daily life because you understand the functioning that we've taught you the last few weeks, then you got nothing. You're just a trivialized human being that's going to miss the best both now and an eternity. You're always going to be talking about the great thing you're going to do someday instead of doing with what you have now, the great thing that can be done now. And then let God show you what a great thing he will do for you. As that congregation broke up at the big church, the people were all smiling. They were oozing, sweetness and light from every poor. They left behind a large offering and then they spent the next week going through the various scheduled programs of the church program for this, a program for that.

And as you looked in the bulletin, that's what you saw. I sat in a large church one time and people all around me had the bulletin and they were picking out what they were going to do during the week. The service was trivialized, but they had all these programs going for people to try to help them to make it in their lives. But the one thing they didn't have was doctrine and the result was what that service did in effect was prepare people to become spiritual casualties and to prepare them to need counseling in one of the church programs. Believers who are trained in doctrine and so are able to build a spiritual maturity structure in the soul will preserve a nation from moral and political destruction. That's why we as a society have a great deal at stake with preachers who have the capacity and who know their job and are able to deliver the deep things of the Word of God to people.

The key for creating a godly society of strong families is the spiritual education of children. All my life that has been the focus of my own ministry. From the time as a 19-year-old I came to San Marcos Military Academy to work in the junior department. My heart was for youth, and I have over all these years that has been the focus of my ministry. That's why Brain Christian Academy is big with me. No Christian education, there's no purpose of the church. And the issue of training the youth is the issue that God has ordained for preparing the next generation to carry the ball. And we minister to families. Indeed we do and indeed we do a great deal. We do everything that families need done for them in instructing them for what purpose so they can properly rear their children. Some parents are a lousy examples to their children in many of the techniques of the Christian life and of the qualities of focus upon a life of godliness and a life that is centered upon serving God. But our job is to try to help them to get a better perspective and to get lined up with what their job is for creating children ready to take over in the next generation. That is the key and that's what we've lost today.

Last night after I had walked through this auditorium about 9:30, I had a spot check that everything was in order. As I drove out, came to the corner, four high school guys walking around, what kind of families did they have? Four high school guys in the dark just sashaying on. I could see they were just sashing around the corner and as I came the light turned, so I turned the corner and as I turned they beat on the car. They thought that was cute. Since I had a sermon to prepare, I didn't want to stop and get out and beat up on them. But I thought to myself, what kind of homes do these guys come to, wandering out around the street like a bunch of stray cats at that time of the night and cruising around to see what they can do? And the biggest thrill in their life is to pound in a car going by.

Well, we can hope that somebody broke a knuckle or something in a process. God is always gracious and these characters you see, these are what our society has created. This is not unusual. This is the quality of youth today. Because we have not been able to get parents focused on what real Christianity is, the godly living through the spirit of God and the practicing of the techniques of the Christian life. The practicing of those things that are important in Christian living. Being where you should be in the study of the Word of God and in the work of the Lord. But we are bearing the bitter fruits through this nation and all the crazies up in the government are discussing how all this is going to be solved. But they're never going to be solved. They're never going to be solved until they turn loose and stop discriminating against we Christians and allow tax money to go for Christian education Schools that are better than any other schools. And for Christian parents who at least then maybe could rise to putting their children in the Christian school and not having this attitude that yeah, the public school is okay. It's not okay. It's a very corrosive place and if you don't think so, I'd suggest you go back and read about Lot and his daughters, and you'll see what happened when he sent them to Sodom Gomorra High School. The results were horrendous, and the sin nature will bring us down. We focus here at Berean Memorial church, and it has always been the case on teaching our young people doctrines. That's what BCA is all about. That's what Berean youth clubs are all about. That's what our Sunday school, our training union, our church services, and we minister to parents to try to get them to rear their children in that same Spirit of the word. The families of generations coming up have to know that there's nothing in life but God's word. Some of them think there's money, there's possessions, there's careers there is self-expression. There is nothing in life.

With God there's only one thing. It's His Word. Psalm 138:2 puts it this way, "I will bow down toward thy holy temple and give thanks to thy name for thy loving kindness." That's the Old Testament word for grace. And thy truth for thou has magnified thy word according to all thy name." God has magnified doctrine above his very name. Doctrine is God. It's a full expression of what God is. And then there's Psalm 119:89. "Forever, Oh Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." See right there in front of you on the communion table. "Forever, Oh Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." When you operate on the Word of God, you are never going to go amiss. You will never lose your way. You'll never be brought down by the world the devil or your sin nature. Because God's word is settled in heaven. It is truth. It is not to be debated. It is not to be adjusted to your particular whims and your particular doctrinal hobbies that you have fallen into.

Now, all of this of course is not what Christians have come to expect from a local church ministry, so what do they do? They all settle for knowing on the corn cobs of inspirational, challenging sermons with grocery lists of what to do which entertain them for the moment instead of feeding upon the nourishing spiritual grain of doctrine which gives capacity for victory over the sin nature within him over the world and over the devil.

How sad to see Christians settling for the corn cob instead of the real grain. But I guarantee you that that's what most of them do and they're pleased to do it. They think they have something. This is the background of what Paul is telling this church that has rung a bell of great joy in his heart. Just as you learned i., God's grace and all that that implies in Christian living dependence upon the Word of God, and they learned. They had instruction in what? Not in inspirational talks and challenges. They had hardcore doctrine. That's what was given to them. They really knew what God thought. They really knew how to act. They really knew how life worked and they came to hate the world and when they began hating the world, they became friends of God, as James says you will. They began having a great dissatisfaction with everything in the world about them and all of its institutions.

You learned it from Epaphras. Epaphras was probably the founder of the church in Colossae. He was probably the pastor-teacher. One of the leading pastor-teachers though there were many house churches in Colossae. Epaphras was the single elder pastor-teacher in Colossae. Every church under the New Testament order if you read it carefully and don't interpolate has only one elder. He is the pastor-teacher of that church. There are many deacons but one elder in each church appointed by God. Recognized by the congregation, invested with authority of leadership. Epaphras is a short name for Epaphroditus, which was a common name in New Testament times. Epaphras is also mentioned in Colossians 4:12-13 and in Philemon 1:23. So this was a man that had considerable activity with the apostle Paul in Paul's missionary ministry. There is another Epaphroditus in Scripture in Philippians 2:25 and 4:18, but he is probably a different person because he comes from Philippi.

Well, Paul, highly esteemed Epaphras because of his grasp of church age grace, truth and faithfulness in teaching doctrine. Remember he had a learned through the ministry of the apostle Paul. There wasn't a written New Testament. He had to learn these things from Paul. He had to learn these things from Paul's associate, and he was a quick study. He learned it and he learned it well and he grasped the significance. He knew the Greek language, so he knew what was being said and what the nuances were of what God the Holy Spirit had written. So Paul has a great deal of respect for this man Epaphroditus because he grasped the truth, and he was faithful in teaching the truth.

What is the work of any pastor-teacher? The work of any pastor-teacher, though it is greatly undermined by a great many demands upon him is the intensely studying the Word of God. He has to be personally trained to be able to explain doctrine to the congregation. He has to have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher. He has to have a capability for teaching that is no honor to him. It is no particular point of respect even that he happens to be one of the people of the male congregation who has been selected for the pastor-teacher gift. What it is a horrible responsibility, a horrible burden and a great price that he will pay at the judge and seat of Christ if he stands up there and is ashamed before the believers because he blew his responsibility. He got scared off. He got intimidated, especially by the feisty ones in the congregation who had their own opinions. Preachers instead of intensely studying the Word of God, often study public relations and psychological devices intensely to build great organizations rather than to build people and to be in great servants of Jesus Christ.

Now you do one or the other, you build great organizations and boy, I'll tell you, you will play ball a certain way. I love to attend big churches because I always get the Word of God confirmed and I always get my orientation reconfirmed that when you go big time you also play ball, or you won't be big time. You don't step on toes, and you are very careful not to distress those who are moving in their own smug, useless world. Well, it's a pastor-teacher's job to teach the Word of God and when they don't want you to be teaching the Word of God and applying it, oh my, don't apply it. Just let God do it. Don't bring it home to where suddenly somebody says, dog, gone it. That's exactly where I am. Now what am I going to do? I don't like that. I know what I'll do. I won't come to the next service.

God has provided the local church organization, each one with its right pastor-teacher for the right congregation. That's a combination. You will never grow to spiritual maturity in the Super grace level if you're not combined with the right pastor, with the right church. That is the fulfillment of every believer's life's mission in God's service – to go to super-grace living. To do that, he must have the right pastor that God is appointed to carry him to that point. Now, if the believer has that kind of a right pastor, and if the believer is in that kind of a prospering spiritual condition and he decides to wander off from his divinely ordained right pastor, what happens? The people who wandered off from Epaphras their right pastor-teacher got off into Gnosticism and some of the early heresies which were horrendous in the Christian church and which is why Epaphras went to Rome. And said to Paul, here's what's happening with some of these people. They're drifting off. They're being captivated by the philosophies, by the Greek thinkers, by the intelligentsia of our day, and they're drifting off from the simplicity of the truth of the Word of God. But when you drift off from your spiritual progress. You drift off from your right pastor-teacher. Your spiritual progress will be greatly diminished. Your life will be trivialized pursuing temporal things and the arrogance of religion will replace the filling of the Holy Spirit in living your life and you will have great tears and great loss at the judgment seat of Christ. It is no small thing to turn your back on the person that God has brought into your life to be your instructor in the Word of God.

The wrong pastor in the church will lead that church almost inevitably into liberalism. He will lead it in the carnality, even in spite of a good church constitution, this will happen. They can have a splendid doctrinal statement. I make a point to go by one of the largest churches in Irving every week to see what's on for next Sunday, and I have not missed yet seeing a passage up there that I know what the subject is. If you don't see me here some Sunday morning, you know I'm over there checking it out. Every Sunday morning, the Scripture up there is going to be the gospel. I can tell immediately from the text that I drive by that those poor folks in that big church loading all that money into the plates as it comes by for what? So they can hear the gospel again and again. People who have believed the gospel, but while they sit there knowing on the corn cobs because nobody's feeding them the nourishing grain of doctrine, which is their heritage and their right, the pastor-teacher is not doing his job. He is failing them.

That kind of a church is going to go into everything under the sun. Programs. It will have programs left and right. You pick up the bullet and it'll be filled with programs. But when you have doctrinal instruction, then you don't need programs. That is the program. Pastor-teacher is naturally the main influence on the mission and the ministry of the congregation. And a spiritually failed church is often, please remember, very successful in organizational structure. Very prosperous in and very big in size of the congregation. A failed church which is not being carried into the doctrines of the Word of God will be a tremendous success as an organization in the property that it has in the money and the people who attend. I give you one a great example. The Mormon Church – you can't beat them for organization, you can't beat them for numerical strength. You can't beat them for money. The only thing you can beat them on is the fact that they do not teach people the Word of God. But when they want to put up one of their nonsensical temples to perform the Masonic Lodge rituals in that temple will cost several millions of dollars. And their headquarters in Salt Lake City will write out the check and hand it to the contractor and it'll be debt free. It's not going to be any scrounging from week to week to make payments. So don't think that that is a sign that is a work of God. What does the Scripture say? By their fruits, you shall know them. And in that Matthew passage, what does the context say? He talks about false teachers. And Jesus says the guy to follow the person that you can trust is the one who is conformed to sound doctrine. That is his fruit, and you will know him what he is by what he tells you.

One of our members has recently been dealing with a group of people and they've been in an uproar ready to stone him because he told them that fruit is a matter of sound doctrine because in that particular group they got a lot of bad doctrine. They wanted to say us how nice you are, how moral you are, how sweet and kind you are to all the people, the poor people and the underdog people and the upper dog people and how all these people have to have needs met. That is what is nice. And when he told them that hell is filled with moral people, that was the end. He says he's going to be able to visit them once more and then he's going to run because they're so outraged. At what? He's right in everything he said. I hope he said it with grace and with kindness and with love, but they don't know how lucky they are to have an informed person telling them the truth about the Word of God. So if the pastor-teacher fails to do his job of teaching, the people will parish spiritually and their blood will be on that teacher's hands in effect.

Pastor-teacher on the other hand, who is faithfully doing his job of teaching doctrine should be held in highest esteem. He should be totally supported. He should be highly financed in the work, and I don't mean that personally. I mean so the work can be done. So he is not walking around like Lazarus still bound up in his grave clothes and can't move. That he is set free because there are the financial means. Although I should tell you that the Bible does say that the pastor-teacher who does a good job of teaching should be paid twice the salary for it. And I'm happy to say that that has been my experience. When I came to Berean church, I came at $25 a week. Preached my first sermon. It was so splendid a businessman came up to me, and I was working as a carpenter on the side. He said if you stop working as a carpenter and just work on the Berean ministry, I'll add $25 to your salary each week. Twice in one week's time I doubled my salary. How many of you have ever done that? But that was very biblical. He should be free to do the job. To be disloyal to such a PT or to desert him in the battle is to be doing that to the Lord and no one needs to remember that more than the pastor-teacher himself.

He represents the Lord, and he has to be very objective, and he has to get his eyes off himself like everybody else and on the Lord. And when people shove it to him, he understands that it is Christ that they're hitting and not himself. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, "But we request of you brethren that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you and have charged over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work, live in peace with one another." How about 1 Timothy, 5:17-18. "Let the elders who rule be considered worthy of double honor as double pay, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, you shall not muzzle the Ox while he is threshing, and the laborer is worthy of his wages."

Then there's Hebrews 13:7, "Remember those who led you, who spoke the Word of God to you and considering the result of their conduct imitate their faith." Then Hebrews 13:17, "Obey your leaders and submit to them for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief. For this would be unprofitable to you." If your pastor-teacher is doing his job and he's acting with integrity and teaching you the Word of God and you turn your nose up at it and you cut out, that's a grief to him. He should not have to suffer grief for having done right by you. Your response should be such that he would experience joy over your response. A congregation with a right pastor-teacher should continually surround him with intense prayer, with intense prayer support that he would not cave in to the spiritually misguided and pushy element that Satan constantly presses against him. Not to do so would be to that congregations both temporal and eternal loss.

God, our Father, we thank You. . .

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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