***The Stable Believer

Colossians 1:21-23

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Colossians 1:23 explains why the awesome, divine promises to believers, which were stated in verse 22, will assuredly be realized. Verse 22 said, "Yet, He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy, and blameless, and beyond reproach.”

Verse 23 says, "Since indeed you most assuredly will continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.”

Verse 23 gives us the reasons why verse 22 will be fulfilled. The rebels against the Word of God in the world of Satan will, in contrast to our experience, with God in heaven, experience the frightening judgments in the tribulation years, and an eternity in the lake of fire. Christians who have been qualified for heaven by reconciliation to God's righteousness through the death of Christ, will continue in the faith (the faith way of salvation). We do not lose that eternal life which God has given to us. Believers standing on the foundation of Jesus Christ, and those who are firmly established in that foundation, are going to remain stable in building a life on this earth in God's service, which He will recognize with eternal rewards in heaven. The Christian's spiritual foundation is Jesus Christ, on which an immovable structure of divine good service is erected, resulting in eternal rewards in heaven.

There are some groups of Christians that not only do not speak about personal rewards for what you have done with your life, now that you've lived it, but they are antagonistic toward discussing that. They try to belittle it, as if it was some kind of self-centered, self-serving, greedy quality about us, that we want to serve God. And we do want to have our treasures stored in heaven. We do want to have those rewards for a life that has been placed in God's hands, and which has fulfilled His purposes and His missions for us. But the Word of God is full of that admonition – that we should consider storing treasures in heaven, and that we should be faithful to perform good works so that we do not come to the place where we've gain the whole world, and lost the potential of our life for eternal rewards.

It is not without significance that when God the Holy Spirit came down to the end of the Revelation, now ready to shut down the revealed Scriptures for all eternity, should before that final period was placed on that book, in Revelation 22:12 said, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." Anybody with any discernment at all can understand what that saying. That is saying that your life on earth only counts when it is a life invested in the service of God. And when He returns, or we return to Him (at death) or at the rapture, that's the first thing that's going to happen. We will be rewarded according to what we have done.

**The Stable Believer**

In Colossians 1:23, we continue looking now at the stable believer. The first thing to consider is that we would be firmly established on the foundation of Christ, and we would be steadfast there. We would be immovable. We're not going to lose that salvation. And that is because we are not going to be moved away. The word "moved away" is "metakineo." This means that we're not going to abandon a position that is held. This word is used only here in the New Testament. The Colossian Christians are not going to be moved away from the principle of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation benefits. They have been chosen of God. They're in the elect, and they're in the family of God. And they're not going to change their minds about it. Certainly, God is not going to change His mind about bringing them into His eternity in heaven. These Colossians will not be dislodged from salvation through Jesus Christ alone. This is what they have received, when they were reconciled to God's absolute righteousness. This is in contrast to the unsaved, who are spiritually unstable, and they do not stand on God's Word in Scripture. Instead they stand in their religious beliefs on the word of man.

Please notice John 8:31: "But Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him: 'If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine." The reason they would not be moved away is because their hope was centered on the Word of God. Their hope was centered on what Scripture had revealed to them. And Jesus said to these Jews who had believed: "If you say with the Word, and if you stay with the teachings that I've given you, then are really My disciples." And what the Lord was implying was that there are a lot of people who are not His disciples.

Just compare that verse with John 6:66 where we read, "And as a result of this, many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. When Jesus put forth the Word of God that was contrary to what these Jews who had been followers of Him (believed), to what their attitudes were, and to what their opinions were, they no longer followed Him. Now, this is a significant point. Anybody who is in touch with God submits to apostolic doctrine. When somebody wants to cut out from an assembly of believers who teach the Word of God, that tells you something about that person. If you cut out from an assembly which is teaching Scripture, and really explaining it, in terms of what it says, and what is behind the translation; and somebody says, "I don't want to attend that church," and they go to something that is rinky-dink, and appeals to the sin nature, and is a good-time operation, even though they respect the Bible, you may submit that that person very likely is not part of the family of God.

1 John 2:19: "They went out from us." Here, John is speaking about people who had abandoned the assembly of the believers that these people were associated with, to whom he was writing: "They went out from us," and the word "us" there refers to the apostles. What they were abandoning was apostolic doctrine. What they were abandoning was true Bible doctrine: "They went out from us (the apostles), but they were not really of us." They were not part of our group. They were not in favor of us, as the apostles: "For if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. But they went out in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us." So, several times the word "us" comes in here. It applies not just to the Christians in general, but specifically to the apostles, and therefore, directly to the Word that the apostles taught. People who abandon the Word of God, show that in all likelihood, they are religious, but they are not part of the family of God.

In 1 John 4:6 we may add: "We are from God. He who knows God listens to us (the apostles). He who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Now I realize that there can be some Christians who can be really way out of fellowship – horribly out of fellowship. But in general, a person who will not listen to the Word of God, and will not listen to a body of believers which are proclaiming that Word, is someone that you should be very cautious of.

I am amazed at the kinds of bitterness, and indifference, and the harshness, and the anger that comes from some Christians who don't want to be associated with the Word of God – who find the Word of God frustrating to them, because it demands a lifestyle that they do not want to live. I've been learning the subtleties of the thinking of people. We're going through a time nationally when there's an enormous amount of personal immorality and personal conflict with the moral standards or the Word of God. And the justifications for that are fantastic – things that I would never have thought of until I listened to people, and from them, I discover how, that which the Bible condemns as sin is OK with them, on some rationalization of their own. And when they do that, they show that they have completely lost their contact with the Spirit of God. They may be Christians, and like the person who has a life of hay, wood, and stubble (uselessness) still goes to heaven. But they go in poor, and with a wasted life. However, there are also people who are unsaved. They hate the Bible, and they hate the Christian who is true to the basics of Scripture.

**Hope**

Now, these Colossians are not like that. The apostle Paul is happy to say that he understands what their situation is. They have the foundation in their life of Christ Jesus. They're firmly established. Furthermore, they're steadfast on that foundation. They're not going to go moving off away from what he calls "the hope." This is the Greek word, "elpis." This word means "hope." It is important to remember that this means something that is anticipated. But when this word is used in the Bible, it is not something that: maybe it'll happen; and, maybe it won't. That's the wonderful thing about this word. When it says that we have a hope, it's a sure thing. When you go and buy your lottery ticket, you have a hope, but that's not a sure thing. But this is Scripture, when the word "hope" is used, it means that it's going to happen.

So, here these people have a hope. This word is used in the Bible of expectation, not of uncertainty. Here it is applied to the hope which is the gospel. And in that gospel of the grace of God, there's a sure way of salvation, so you have a basis for a hope. Those who are genuinely reconciled to God are going to stand firm in their hope of heaven on grace salvation, because they know that man cannot undo what God alone has performed for them in salvation. Therefore, they have a hope – the hope of what the gospel promises: eternal life from God; and, to escape from the lake of fire. And they are going to realize that.

On the other hand, people who are merely religious and emotional about it (emotionally religious – they have an emotional approach to God) – those people very often are unsaved, or there very often so shallow that their hope is also non-existent or shallow. This was described in the parable in Luke 8:13 of the seeds in the soil: "And those (the seed who fell on the rocky soil) are those who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy." This an emotional approach – a not a head approach or a heart approach, but a thinking approach: "But those have no firm root. They believe for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away." Here is somebody who has an emotional attachment. That is what it means by "believe." But this is not a conviction where they're trusting in Christ, and they've gotten into the security of the lifeboat of salvation by God's grace.

What their hope is in, is the gospel. This word "gospel" is a very familiar one in Scripture: "euaggelion." This word in the Greek means "good news." It refers here to the gospel of the grace of God for salvation, as it was preached by Paul and his associates, as the heralds of Christ. In Christian Service Brigade, the highest rank is "Call," the herald of Christ. And on the badge, the pin that some of you have earned in the club programs are the words in Greek . . . which mean herald of Christ. Here, the gospel is what these heralds proclaim" God has provided salvation. God does it. And God keeps us saved. And that's why it's good news. It's not only that there's a way to escape an eternity in the lake of fire. That's pretty good news in itself. But the fact that it is possible for a human being to change his destiny from death to the eternal life, and that it's possible to change it in such a way that it's irrevocable. You cannot lose it again. That's the full good news of the gospel.

However, the false teachers, such as were plaguing the believers in Colossae, come through with a different gospel. They come through with a bad news gospel. In Galatians 1:6-7 says, these Galatian Christians are wanting to go back to the Mosaic legal system, and Paul says, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him Who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel, which is really not another. Only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ." What Paul was saying was: "I cannot believe that you want to abandon the hope and the good news of a salvation that God will give you as a gift, by simply accepting it through trusting His Son to save you. And instead, you are listening to these false teachers (they were in Galatia also), who are telling you about a gospel that you may secure through your legalistic works. But what they call the gospel is not a gospel, because it's not good news; because it won't work; and because you can't manage to get into heaven by doing these things.

So, Paul says that the word "gospel" doesn't even apply to the message you get from. But Paul says, "The message I gave you – that really is good news." That's why he says, "The hope which comes from the gospel, which you have heard." This is the true gospel of salvation from God in Scripture, in contrast to the false gospel, that Satan puts out from human viewpoints.

Again, in Galatians 1:8-9 (the next two verses) say, "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be a accursed." "Accursed" means let him be doomed to the lake of fire: As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.

You know as well as I do that there's a lot of contaminated gospel being preached out in Christian circles. Some of this contaminated gospel is done in all sincerity. It is by people who are horribly sloppy in teaching the gospel, and who add things to it that only cause people to digress from the key feature of believing the gospel.

It is amazing how the devil gets in there and says, "Let's rework this. Let's have it said differently than they do in the Bible." I was listening to a very famous evangelist in our country on TV one time, and he was giving the invitation after one of his rallies. He quoted John 1:12, and he was telling people how they must be saved. John 1:12 – he quoted that verse because he had just told the people in that vast stadium that you cannot be saved just by believing something/ Easy believeism isn't going to make it. You have to *receive* Christ as your Savior. And he kept pounding away at the word "received." Then he turned to John 1:12, and he read it, to prove his point: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God." And he stopped. I happened to know the verse. I said, "Oops, wait a minute. What's going on here?" And he hit it again: "But as many as received Him:" "You see? You must receive Christ if you want to be saved: "To them he gave the right to become the children of God." And he stopped again.

If you have your Bible open, you can see what he left out, which was the whole key to everything, because the last line says, "Even to those who believe in His name." And the word "even" is explaining how you receive Christ. Do you know what it is to receive Christ? Would you, as an unsaved person, know what it is to receive Christ? Well, you fold your hands, and you close your eyes, and you imagine Jesus Christ, worming his way into your heart, and coming into your life – all those cutesy-pooh phrases they use. That doesn't mean a thing. Who understands that? But you tell a person: "Now, either God is lying, or He's telling you the truth. He's paid for your sins through His Son. He is willing to give you eternal life on the simple basis of accepting what He's already done for you. But you have to take it by faith. If you try to do it by works, He can't give it to you. The bottom line is: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. How about it? You want it?

Anybody understands what it is to believe or not to believe something, but these other things – receive Christ? What does that mean? That can be so distorted. And you sit there dumbfounded that biblical Christians could get so far off track. And suddenly, the good news of the gospel is lost. But when Paul preached, I guarantee you he did not speak with these words that distract people from what is the way to God. That was clearly demonstrated when that poor jailer in Philippi fell at his feet in fear of God and said, "What must I do to be saved?" And did the apostle Paul say, "Invite Jesus into your heart." Did he say, "Receive Jesus into your life?" Did he say, "Try to receive Christ." No, he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." And that word "believe" ("pisteuo") means "to trust Him."

So, why does the gospel of the grace of God, based on the death of Jesus Christ, while he bore our moral guilt, the sins of all mankind, and a salvation which needs only to be received by trusting in Christ as a gift apart from works – why does that have to be so contaminated? . . . And there are many people who think they are saved because they walked an aisle, or they raised their hand, or did some other bit of public action or human works, who think now they're saved, but they are not.

Galatians 1:15-17: please listen. Paul says, "But when He who had set me apart, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the gentiles. I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. But I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Paul is pointing this out to these people, that when he tells them that salvation is apart from any of their legalistic works, and any of their ritual, and any of their Mosaic Law, he is saying, "I tell you that on the basis, not that Peter taught me this; that James explained it to me; or, that any of the previous apostles had anything to do with it. When I was saved, I left Damascus quietly at night over the wall to get out of town to save my life. And I went out to the Arabian Desert. And for three solid years, I was in seminary by myself with the Lord Jesus Christ, meeting me in daily Bible class. And there I learned not only that salvation is by the grace of God, but I learned about the magnificent new thing that God was doing called the church, the body of Christ – totally separated and different from Israel. Israel's program has seven years to go for its completion, and it will yet be done. But what I did (what I was doing) was learning the privileges; the superior honor; the power system; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the grace system of perception; and, the super grace life that is available to only church believers. And for me, that was a thrilling experience.

So, Paul can say, "When I teach you something, I got it directly from the Lord Himself." How dumb indeed then it is to listen to some smoothed-tongue, pretentious preacher appealing to the sin nature, which leads us from God, and into Satan's world system, and into a doomsday salvation. The Colossian Christians are not ready to abandon Paul grace salvation for the works of the false teachers in Colossae who are appealing to them. Paul says, "Listen to God's Word which was delivered by an apostle. Don't listen to the human word delivered by false apostles. God's Word will produce the results. Satan's Word will take you into eternal death.

Ephesians 4:14-16: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, and by craftiness and deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him Who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body (the body of Christ), being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love." Here is the development of the body of Christ through the Word of God. And the apostle Paul said, "If you are on that course of instruction, and you keep up your food lifeline, you will never be tricked by somebody who is a good person, but some preacher who has become sloppy in distinguishing the differences in the Word of God that guide one to the truth, or simply guide one carefully around it so that you miss what God has for you.

**Proclaim**

"If indeed (and you are) continuing in the faith (in the gospel of the grace of God), firmly established on a foundation which is Jesus Christ, and steadfast (building a life of divine, good service for divine good works), and you will not be moved away from the hope which the gospel has given you – that which you have heard from Paul and the other apostles, which was proclaimed." And here we come to our word "proclaim:" "kerusso." This is an announcement made by a herald of Christ, as we just mentioned, like the Christian Service Brigade.

Now, this is something done by the apostle Paul in preaching the gospel. It says that what they are not going to abandon is what had been proclaimed. And this was that passive voice that was done by those to whom Christ witnessed: the apostles; and, the apostles to those whom they taught – so, by Paul and others. And it is a spiritual principle. At any point, they are proclaiming, as heralds of Christ, the gospel of the grace of God. And Paul warned the lost about the Lake of fire. He urged faith in Jesus Christ, while there was still time. There comes a time when it is too late to be saved. The apostle Paul's point was constantly to people: "Now is the day of salvation. Don't gamble on it. Don't try to do this sometime later. God is speaking to you now. There will come a time, if you resist, when the Holy Spirit will no longer work upon you."

In Acts 26:19-20, Paul, speaking to King Agrippa, his call to minister to the gentiles. "Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedience to the heavenly vision, but yet declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem, and then throughout all the regions of Judea, and even to the gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance." They were to repent. How do you repent? The other side of repentance is believing: "I believe the gospel, and I begin to live that kind of a life – a life that has repented from the old sin way to God's way."

This is what has been preached, Paul says, "In all creation." What he means by creation is that he's referring to the totality of created things. It is what is referred to here in Revelation 3:14: "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea, write: 'The Amen; the faithful; the true witness; the beginning of the creation of God says.'" Who is the beginning of the creation of God? Jesus Christ. He was the Creator. So, he's saying here that the gospel that Paul says the Colossians will never abandon (they will stand firm to it), is one which has been proclaimed under all creation. This is referring to the inhabited known world, and the mankind in it. It means to all kinds of people, though not to everyone.

This is those who are under heaven. The word "heaven" here refers to the planet earth and to the atmosphere around it. There are in the Bible three heavens. The first heaven is what is around the earth, the atmosphere. The second heaven is the interstellar spaces. And the third heaven is the throne room of God Himself. So, the true gospel from God is being proclaimed far and wide. It's not just some local cult, far and wide, all over the known world, within the first heaven area. This mission to mankind, to planet earth, is the same mission that you and I as believers are also called upon to fulfill in our day.

Matthew 28:18-19: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them (which means, 'as you go') to observe all that I commanded (doctrinal instruction). And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'" So, the Lord Jesus Himself was called upon to present this same kind of message. And that's the message that we are to present.

Then He says, "This has been taught under heaven – this message which is the sure thing of the grace of God. And then he says, "Of which I." Now, ordinarily in the Greek, the word "I" is not a separate word. It is just appended as a prefix or a suffix onto another word. And here it is separate – the word "ego" is the word for "I." And Paul says, "I personally, and I stress that I myself am the one who was given a certain permission to preach this kind of a gospel under heaven:" "I myself was made." And the word for "made" was "ginomai." And "ginomai" actually means "become:" "I became something in the hands of God." Paul was called to God service as a missionary proclaiming the gospel. He mentions that in Acts 22:14-15. He said, "The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for him to all men, of what you have seen and heard" – Paul's testimony to God's commissioning of him. Paul, in other words, did not appoint himself. It is something that God did for him.

The result was that he became a minister. The word minister in the Greek looks like this. You will recognize it: "diakonos," from which we get our word deacon. And what a deacon is, is a minister. It means a servant. Paul was commissioned by God to serve him as a divine channel of a true gospel salvation – one from which the Colossians would not turn, and would not want to turn, and would not need to turn. They would be secure in this true gospel for their salvation. Paul was called, and then he was trained by the Lord Jesus Christ with doctrinal understanding. Then he was commissioned to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God, as God's servant in the church age.

In several places, Paul makes it very clear that what he is doing is by a divine calling, which is the way we should be doing it. I'm always a little uneasy when I announce something that needs to be done at Berean Church: some financial needs; or, some service need, because I'm always concerned that some Christian, who wants to see the things done that need to be done, may jump on board to do something which was not preordained, as Colossians 2:10 has told us, for his personal service. But Paul is very clear. What he was doing, as an apostle, and the message that he preached, was directly from God, and his commission was from God. You and I are constantly getting commissions – directions for which we are responsible before the Lord to perform. So, when you find that your heart is moved to something, check it out with him. And if you feel that He opens the door, and you're clear about that – this is what He has enabled you to do, and put on your heart to do, then go with it, by all means.

In Acts 9:15-16, Paul says, "But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to bear My name among the gentiles, and kings, and the sons of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for My namesake." Here, the Lord is speaking to Ananias. Paul has been blinded on the road to Damascus. And Ananias is told to go look up this man. Ananias is afraid because he knows that this man has been commissioned by the Pharisees to murder Christians, and to bring them into custody. But the Lord says, "He's my chosen instrument, and he's going to bear My name. I'm going to show him how much he will suffer."

That can be said of every one of us here. We are a chosen instrument. The adults? Yes. You young people? You betcha. You're not chosen until you get to a certain age. You are chosen from the moment of your birth – and the younger you are, and the smarter you are, to find what God has chosen you for. The chosen instrument of mine, to bear the name of Jesus Christ, and how you live; how you speak; and, how you associate with people, as well as in specific words, between kings; people, of authority; those who may snub you; those who may laugh at you; the people of Israel – the people of God who have turned your back upon their Messiah. And the result will be that kind of faithful testimony – you'll suffer for it. That's part of being a true servant of the most high God.

In Acts 26:16-19, Paul reviews the situation again of his commission. Paul says, "Who are you, Lord?" The Lord said, "I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting." And the Lord says, "But arise, and sin on your feet. For this purpose, I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness, not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you" – the instruction he is to deliver about the church age: "Delivering you from the Jewish people and from the gentiles to whom I am sending you; to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision."

Now, you and I have not had a heavenly vision in the way of a call, but we have indeed a call to which we must not be disobedient. Nothing is more important than to fulfill the purpose for which you were born. And all along the line, God has purposes to fulfill. He does not have purposes of tragedy; He does not have purposes of failure; and, He does not have purposes of being a victim of Satan. His purposes are to make you significant in fulfilling your mission. Suffering? Yes. But as he says, "Suffering honorably as a Christian for doing what is right."

So, there's a lot of grief that people bring into their lives. They make wrong choices for their life's employment. They get into deals and businesses that are bad, and out of the will of God. They get associated with people. And they may recoil from those people at first, because they have a sense that here's a person who is not operating on God's mind as I am. But soon you get acclimated, and pretty soon you're deeply involved with that person. The next thing you know, you're married to somebody that's nothing but a misery to you. And for what? Simply because you proved disobedient to the heavenly vision, as portrayed in the Word of God.

In Ephesians 3:4-10, Paul has another statement: "And by referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ." He's talking about the mystery of the church, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." You could not read about the church age, and all of its privileges, in the Old Testament, because it wasn't there. It was a big secret of God. That's why it's called a mystery. Then Paul says, "I learned it from the Lord in His instruction to me." To be specific (verse 6), that the gentiles were fellow heirs, and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Was it a secret in the Old Testament that gentiles would be saved? No, it wasn't. We always knew that gentiles were going to be saved by God. Gentiles were saved throughout the Old Testament.

So, what does he mean? What was the secret? Specifically, that Jews and gentiles would be put into one body, as one people different from gentiles and Israel – the church. That truth is unknown in many Christian circles. So, they're still running around, chasing the rabbits of the Old Testament, not realizing the honors of being part of the body of Christ, and all the power system through the Spirit of God that that entitles them to. Paul says, "Of which I was made a minister, according to the gifts of God's grace, which was given to me according to the workings of His power. To me, the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to preach to the gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration (or the dispensation) of the mystery which, for ages, has been hidden in God, Who created all things (the dispensation of the church), in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places."

We live in the best age of all of history. We live in the age of the grace of God – in the age of the church. Our opportunities for privileges and honors, both on this earth and in heaven, are beyond our fondest dreams, and certainly beyond anything that people in other ages ever hope to experience. We have it. We're already seated with Christ in heavenly places. And all the riches of His heirship are ours. When God says, "Through Christ, you are My son, and you are My heir, He's talking about each of us. Most of us do not fathom what kind of a magnificent life we are capable of living, because we are the heirs of God.

One more: 1 Timothy 2:5-7: "For there is one God, and one Mediator also, between God and men – the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony born at the proper time. And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle. I am telling the truth. I'm not lying, as a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth." So, the apostle Paul was very much conscious of the fact that he had a mission by divine appointment. And what he experienced, we too have. Therefore, that mission is the basis of Colossians 1:23: "Since indeed you will continue in the faith, firmly established on the foundation established of Christ Jesus, and steadfast (you will not deviate, and you will be building on that foundation, not running off to some other foundation), not moved away from the hope of the gospel – eternal life that can come only through the gospel of the grace of God." You won't be throwing in your religious rituals to make it: "That which you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven." That gospel of God's magnificent grace and the privileges of the church age believer: "Of which I (not some rinky-dink preacher on TV, but I), Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, was made a minister." I was a special agent to give you this information.

What Paul is saying is: "If I had not been faithful to my commission, you would not have experienced the joy of the certainty of your future that you now have." If you don't tell people this week, that's going to be the same problem for them.

Now here we are, at the close, and we've run right into a big question. How do I make the presentation? How do I do it, so I don't interject something that distracts people from being saved? That should be a great concern and fear. If a great evangelist can distract people on national television in a huge stadium by deviating off from scriptural ground for salvation (trying to doll things up), maybe even you and I can miss the boat. Yet it's so simple. You need to know two bad things that are true of every human being. Then you need to know two good things that are true of every human being. If you get these settled in your mind, you'll be as magnificent a witness as the apostle Paul ever dreamed of being. And next Sunday, we'll begin there.

Our Father, we want to thank You for Your Word, and for this instruction. And we pray that You will help us to take a note of inspiration and challenge from the apostle Paul's example, that we too, knowing that we have a firm ground upon which to stand, we don't have to preoccupy ourselves with worrying about whether we have the gospel. To us, it is the gospel of peace. And our hearts are at ease. We are settled on this issue, so we can concentrate on the battle which is before us. We pray that You will help us to fight it in this world with an understanding of the Word of God, and with presenting things with the mind of Christ, in Whose name we pray. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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