***The Pastor-Teacher Gift

RV54-02***

We have come to a subject which obviously is very important in the minds of many of the believers here, by the response of anticipation that was expressed to me at the last session. As I walked over here this morning, one lady caught me and said, "I've got special duty over here. Don't go too fast in this session." But we have some very important material to cover, and we'll get it all down on tape so that you can review it.

**Satan**

We are in Revelation 3:7-13, studying the letter for the church at Philadelphia, segment number 30. Satan, for most Americans, is a superstition. People in this country, by and large, talk about the devil, but they don't really believe he exists. He's kind of a comic strip character invented by unsophisticated minds. Whatever the devil may look like, I'll guarantee you that he does not look like you see him portrayed in comic strips, with the horns, and the pointed tail, and the pitchfork. This is a caricature of the devil which was invented by Satan himself to throw people off the track. While most Americans think that Satan is a figment of somebody's imagination, God, in His Word, says nothing could be farther from the truth.

One of the places in the Bible that we have information concerning Satan is in Ezekiel 28:12. I just want to refer to a couple of verses there as a background of our study today. The prophet here is speaking in terms of the king of Tyre, who actually was a historical person who ruled over the kingdom of Tyre. But as so often happens, the Scriptures, while speaking about an actual historical event, will, in the prophet's leading of the Holy Spirit and in the prophet's mind, leapfrog to a greater issue which that represents. The antichrist is often referred to in Scripture in terms of a local figure. For example, Antiochus Epiphanes, in the inter-testament period, is spoken of in Scripture. Yet, in the very way he is described, you can see that he is a symbolic representation of a greater personality that is coming down the line who will, in a greater way, do what Antiochus Epiphanes did in his time.

So, here you have the king of Tyre that's being spoken of, and then suddenly you realize that some of the things that are being said here could not be true of a human being. They could not be true of an earthly ruler. You realize that the prophet, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, has shifted into a broader scope of revelation than that particular personality that he's dealing with. Verse 12 says, "Son of man (speaking to the prophet), take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyre, and say unto him, 'Thus says Jehovah Elohim. You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.'" Then drop down to verse 14. This person is identified in such a way that we clearly know that the prophet has now shifted gears beyond the human element: "You are the anointed cherub (a certain class of angels) that covers;" that is, the one who is protective of God's holiness. This is a certain angel who was created to be the guard of God's throne room: "And I have set you so. You have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created till iniquity was found in you."

So, the prophet has told us that there was a super angel created of the cherubim class. This is an angel who actually was at one time the archangel (there is only one archangel at a time). Michael holds that position now, but at God's original creation, this devil was the archangel. He was the supreme cherub, and he was perfect in all his ways. He was absolute holiness until something happened in his mind that set up a series of actions that revealed sin within this creature that God had made, and who was, in fact, the number one angel of all God's creation.

Drop down to Ezekiel 28:17: "You heart was lifted up because of your beauty. You have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I will cast you to the ground. I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you." We are told here in this verse the two qualities that are supremely observed about this cherub in Scripture: He was the smartest thing that God created in all the universe, and he was most beautiful to look at. His beauty and his wisdom were the cause of his downfall. We are told that this angel was motivated by his beauty and by his supreme wisdom to desire to displace God – to push God off the throne, and to take His place. Satan, who is here being described, thought he could do it.

The devices which are used by Satan in seeking to be like God are the product of his amazing IQ. The devices that Satan uses are extremely clever. We have looked at one of those devices – the poisoning of the stream of human thought. We have spent several sessions looking at outstanding opinion-formers – men who shaped the thinking of people with lines of thought that were directly condemned in Scripture, and yet presented them in such a way that most of the human race believes that these things are true. The way the devil does this, in part, is that he surrounds it with the sugar-coating of a lot of basic truth – a lot of things to which you can say, "Yes, this is true. This is true. This is true." But it takes a discerning Christian mind to say, "I don't care how much is true. At the heart of it is a falsehood, and that piece of cyanide is the thing that's going to kill you, no matter how much the rest of the pill is covered with a non-lethal substance."

So, the devil, because he has this amazing IQ, is extremely clever. He uses religion to try to fulfill his ambitions to replace God in the universe. Religion is his ace card. Religion is what God hates above everything in all the universe. It is a direct creation of Satan himself. Remember that religion has nothing to do with God. The word "religion" applies, in scriptural terms, to man's efforts to gain merit with God – man's efforts to gain salvation by his own goodness. We've got all kinds of religion in the world, and God has nothing but contempt and utter condemnation for all religious systems.

**Cults**

So, Satan has created many cults which give its adherents the impression that they are worshiping God, and that they are going to heaven, while, in fact, they are honoring Satan as a supreme being. These cults are often very emotionally-dominated movements. This is the cement. This is the drawing card. Sometimes they express the emotion. At other times, it's just the emotion toward their cult group. They have a heady sense that they are uniquely called of God, and that God has given them a revelation. The Mormons, for example, have the heady quality about them that they are a superior people because they have been informed by God in a superior way through a superior revelation. There is an emotional quality at the heart of every cult movement.

A cult group can basically be identified by a non-biblical plan of salvation. The word "cult" is deceptive. When you think about a cult, you think about some way-out group that's sitting around a jungle fire, and they're dancing and beating the drums, and we say, "That's a cult." Or you're thinking about some very sophisticated group like the B'nai B'rith group, where if you go to their meetings, they have people who play flutes and play harps. It's all very cultured and sophisticated. I used to hang around those places when I was a teenager in the city of Chicago, and it was very impressive to see all the accouterments of dignity, but it was a cult. The reason I knew it was a cult was because when it came to how to go to heaven, they took you straight into hell.

Therefore, you must understand that this is the key feature. Now, that is shocking, and I know that that is a little distressing for some of you right off the bat because you're thinking of vast denominations. Some of your relatives are part of those denominations. They are great zealots of Jesus Christ, and they are great devotees of the living God, and of Scripture, and of everything that goes with what one would consider a true follower of Christ. Yet, you know that they teach a salvation by means of some human effort, and by means of some work element. At some point, while they praise Jesus Christ, they interject something that they do: "My water baptism will take me to heaven. My attending the Mass will take me to heaven. My confession of my living will take me to heaven. My living a good life will take me to heaven." All of these are elements of human doing. What is human doing? What a person can do.

In the Old Testament, the mark of Israel was circumcision on the male. That was the mark that you were part of God's chosen earthly people. The Jews made the same mistake that people make with water baptism today, for example. They thought that that circumcision was the means of salvation. One of the battles in the early church that was fought was that, "No, circumcision never was a means of salvation." It was always a symbol of the flesh – the old sin nature being removed. It was never a means for salvation. It was always a symbol of salvation. So, here was something that God ordained. God told them to perform this right. There were a lot of Jews who were saying, "I can point to you right in my Bible. God told us to do this. That's why I know that this is part of salvation. And Paul said, "When you do it, all you're doing is mutilating the body, and you're not going anywhere but into hell."

That's the same thing with any other human doing. A human work is what you can do. And don't come back at me, as I've had it done so many times, that if God tells you to do the work, then it's not a human work. You're wrong. Circumcision is a prime classic example of that. Anything a human being can do is a human work. Anything that a human being can put forth in effort – that is a human work.

Now, what we're up against is people, therefore, who are part of cult groups who are trying to make it with God on something they do. These people often reveal their problem by such problems as they're not sure of going to heaven. ... I don't know what you're thinking may be, but you may be sitting here, and you are bothered about whether you're going to heaven. If suddenly you found yourself in a crisis situation, and two minutes from now, you're going to be on the other side, it would be all panic for some people, because they're not sure they're going to heaven.

I know a man who just expressed that he's active in a great denomination, and he has been in it all his life. He said, "I'm just not sure I'm going to heaven. I hope so. I'm looking forward to it, but I'm not sure." I said, "That's a very dangerous thing that you've just said. That expression (that you're not sure you're going to heaven) tells me that you think that going to heaven depends on something that you have done or not done. Therefore, it is almost a sure sign that you're not going to heaven." His face turned white right on the spot. He said, "Do you mean that just because I'm in doubt, that that's indicative that I'm not saved?" I said, "I can't say whether you're saved or not. You'll have to say that. But that expression is a bad sign to me. I know enough about the Bible that when a person is not sure he's going to heaven, that means that he's depending on something of his own doing, or he would be sure. If you're trusting God, then you're sure. But if you're trusting in some human doing, then you never know whether you've done all the right doing, and you don't ever know if you've done enough of it. There's always a doubt."

So, some people think, "I'm saved today, and then I'm lost again tomorrow." I sometimes hear somebody who says, "I think I can be saved today, but I could lose my salvation tomorrow." I'm almost certain that he is not going to heaven, because that belief is also a signal that it's based upon something that they think they're doing to go to heaven. So, if they don't behave themselves, God's going to jerk their salvation away from them. But you didn't get your salvation on the basis of something that you merited. You got it as a grace gift that you accepted, entirely produced by Jesus Christ, or you didn't get it at all. It's not your personal conduct. It's not gaining merit.

Don't believe the preacher who's conning you with the idea that it's your sacrifice and your service that is what God is looking for. God is not interested in your sacrifice or your service in order to prepare you to deserve to go to His heaven. He's just looking for somebody who says, "I'm a slob. I'm a sinner. I'm a zero. I'm contaminated from the top of my brain cells to the end of my toenails with the sin nature. I can produce no divine good. Therefore, I stand before You without any claims to any merit, and I cast myself upon Your mercy, and I accept your gift of salvation through your Son." Then you are baptized by the Holy Spirit immediately into the body of Christ. You're home free. You're in for good. That's where you are.

Some legalist may say, "Yeah, but you go out and boy, you'll live like the devil then." That's right. You can go ahead and do that. I can guarantee you that God will start burning your tail in a hurry if you do. You will learn what discipline is, because God doesn't take any horsing around in His family. Once you're in that family of God, you are expected to live up to standards that are commensurate with Scripture. That is why the apostle Paul was so careful to teach people that God will discipline you by, first of all, bringing upon you physical disruption (physical factors and emotional factors). Things will begin to come apart. If that doesn't teach you, then He will bring upon you sickness, illness, and disease. If that doesn't change you, and that doesn't bring you back to change to a godly lifestyle commensurate with Scripture, then He may decide that you might as well just go to heaven, because you're not going to earn any rewards; you're in His way here; you're not of any use; and, He'll take your life, and take you home to heaven. That in the Bible is described as the sin unto death.

So, you're not fooling around with God relative to your conduct as a believer. That is all very clear. What I am saying is getting into the family of God has nothing to do with what you do, or what you think. It only has to do with what you believe, and that is the gospel. Once that is believed, you're in.

Now, Satan has created these religious systems that confuse all this. Sometimes it is terribly hard for us to witness to people who come out of these big denominations, who are so confident that they have the voice of God ringing in their ears, and all they have is some religious system that Satan has created. These systems give these people the impressions that they have a basis of salvation that's drawn from the Bible, and that's actually based on something that Christ has done. But at the heart of it, they have incorporated some act of human doing well.

Romans 11:6 says that if it is of grace, it is not of works; and, if it is of works, it is not of grace. They're mutually exclusive. We are told in Ephesians 2:8-9 that God only saves by grace. So, if you have contaminated the grace basis of salvation, then God is helpless to do anything for you. He will not save you in any other way, except by grace. A cult group always adds human works to sacrifice. I'm going to let you name the cult groups. It's been shocking enough, probably, for some of you here thus far. I will let you name the cult groups, because when you start naming them, you do recoil in horror to realize how many millions of sincere church members are marching systematically right into the lake of fire, because Satan has brought them a religion instead of a faith in Christ. Our job is tough to do, because we're having to untangle all of this confusion that Satan has interjected.

**Spiritual Productivity**

When the devil loses a follower to Jesus Christ through salvation by grace; when a person rejects religion and turns to the Savior on the basis of faith; and, when he seeks justification by faith alone, then the devil proceeds to try to squelch a person's spiritual productivity. That's what we want to talk about now. The issue is personal spiritual productivity. Having once entered the family of God, that is the beginning. I guarantee you that then the devil sends his demon agents out, and they evaluate you in your character; in your temperament; and, in your style. They take some very careful notes on you as to what they can expect from you. They proceed in a very systematic way, with Satan's super IQ governing the whole operation, to undermine your life as a believer, so that you end up as a zero Christian: going to heaven; but, zero productivity. That is very important to Satan. He switches to squelching productivity.

For example, you keep practicing religion, even though you're saved. That's one of the most common ways of doing this. People are born again, but they keep practicing religion. They keep going through religious ritual. Some people make the sign of the cross. Some people cross themselves. Some people observe religious holidays. Some people do all kinds of things. Some people believe in taboos. Some people believe they shouldn't do certain things. Some people believe they should do other things. There are some things you shouldn't do, and there are some things you should do. But there's no connection with your walk before God in terms of spiritual maturity. People who were saved by grace think that they can become spiritual by their efforts. It is possible for a local church or denomination to have a grace system of salvation, and to have a works system of spiritual development. Don't forget that. It is possible to belong to a group that is very clear on salvation by grace, and is completely fouled-up on spiritual development by human efforts and good works.

They have taboos, rituals, and legalism. I don't smoke, and I don't chew, and I don't go with girls that do. Therefore, I know that the Lord is moving me on up there – up there to the glory land of spiritual maturity. Well, you're not going anywhere with those kinds of personal taboos and those kinds of personal effort. I'm not going to regale you with all the things that people do and don't do because they think they're going to make it with God. The legalists are with us enough. You can ask them. They'll explain it to you.

The problem is, that without a spiritual maturity structure in the soul, a believer can produce very little divine good Christian service in order to move God's work forward. Christians producing human good service rather than Holy Spirit-led divine good service are no problem for Satan. He doesn't care how much religious service you do. He doesn't care how many religious activities you're in. He likes it. As long as he's got you running around observing religion, you're not going to be any trouble to him. Your witnessing is zero. Your praying is worth zero. Your giving of money is worth zero. Everything that you think is Christian Service is zero with God.

You need to get over that idea that sincerity is going to count with the Lord. A lot of people have been hurt for all eternity. Many have taken themselves into hell because they thought their sincerity was going to be recognized by God, and as long as they were trying to do their very best, that they would then be carried away into the Lord's presence. There are always people that try to pray to give you the idea that they're sincere. Every now and then, we hear somebody get up and they pray, and then they say, "And, O, Lord, please forgive us all of our sins, and help us to so live that You will save us in the end." ... But God isn't going to do anything of the sort. He's neither going to save you by what you do, nor is He going to advance spiritually by what you do. As long as you offer human good production, that's alright with the devil. He wants you to be conned. He is a master at conning people. Christians who are producing human good are losing rewards in heaven for all eternity even though they are born again.

I'm happy to tell you that God has already outmaneuvered Satan in this tactic. The Lord knew exactly what the devil was going to come up with in religion as the con game to keep people from going to heaven, and to keep Christians from producing divine good and from earning rewards. When Christians are earning rewards, they are doing God's service; people are being saved; Christians are being edified; the darkness of Satan is being pushed back; societies are being stabilized; societies are understanding the divine institutions; people know how to function in their lives; they know how to be successful; and, they know how to come to the place where God can make them prosperous in every way. As long as Satan is frustrated, society moves ahead.

**The Pastor-Teacher Gift**

The Lord has made a provision, and that provision centers around a spiritual gift which is always given to a male person. It is called the pastor-teacher gift. Certain males of the human race, at the point of salvation (at the point that they personally receive Christ as Savior) are endowed with the pastor-teacher gift. It is a gift of an ability to teach spiritual things, and to convey them in such a way that people understand and grasp them, and are able to apply them. This is in such a way that the very fact that he utters them rings a bell of truth in the hearts of people. The Lord Jesus Christ is a prime example of this. One of the reasons the religious leaders hated Him so much was because they said, "He speaks with authority." That meant that when He opened His mouth and declared, "This is what God thinks on the basis of Scripture," boy, it rang a bell of truth, and people said, "He's right, and our educated religious leaders are wrong."

The pastoring gift is the guiding gift into the learning of doctrine, and into the application of that truth to one's life. It's the taking care of the sheep. It's the standing up against the person who comes into the local congregation who wants to be a strong-armed heretic – one who wants to teach false doctrine; and, one who wants to take over and push the sheep around. These are all the things that can happen in a local congregation. When a pushy church member rises up, who has to take the brunt and the gaff? It's the pastor-teacher. If he's a milquetoast who stands there wringing his hands, that congregation is in a lot of trouble. It is his business to knock heads and to take care of his flock against the constant inroads of Satan who is putting people in there to try to undermine the lives of his people.

So, God has provided this gift. If you'll turn to Ephesians 4:11, we're going to anchor ourselves there now. This tells us that, here in the age of grace, in the post-resurrection of Jesus Christ (the post-ascension era): "He gave some apostles (that we no longer have). He gave some prophets (that gift we no longer have)." Those were communication gifts necessary to get the Bible written: "He gave some evangelists." That gift we have functioning today. That's the primary communication gift to the lost to bring them into salvation. When the evangelist gets done with his job, then we come in with pastors-teachers. In another part of the Word of God, we're told that a pastor is an elder and a bishop. It's all the same person. You cannot hold that office unless you have the ability of teaching. There are some people who are teachers of the Word of God who do not have the ability of pastoring. The pastor-teacher gift is a combination gift, and this gift is specifically provided to undermine Satan's attempt to keep people from doing the work of the Lord, and to keep people from genuine Christian service that does bring eternal rewards.

This pastor-teacher is confronted with the job of filling up a vast spiritual deficiency that exists in every person at the point that he's born again. You come into the Christian life not only as a baby, but completely ignorant of all divine viewpoint. About the only divine viewpoint you have is that you're a sinner, and that God has made a grace provision for your salvation. You've accept that, and that's as far as you've gone. But you know nothing. That's what's so terrible about bringing these people in who are prominent entertainment personalities, or they're prominent people in the sports world. They suddenly get born again, and pretty soon they're on the speaking circuit. Doing what? They're going around sharing their spiritual deficiency with other people. That's a great injury to people, because these people inevitably have something to say that is not only contrary to Scripture, but very injurious to those who hear them.

However, this is part of Satan's game. Satan says, "The way to get people to believe the Bible is to prove it by having some famous movie star get up and say, 'I believe the gospel.'" Listen, I know some famous movie stars that are so fouled-up, and have believed so many ignorant things, that I wouldn't be impressed by anything they believe, even if it was the gospel. You don't need those people to prove God is right. I resent it, and I suspect that God does, too. The thing that we need is the acceptance that the Bible speaks the truth.

So, the pastor-teacher is given to fill up this spiritual deficiency. You cannot get this spiritual deficiency filled up by getting together in your front room with some of your favorite friends, and all of you singing some little songs. You get a guy up there with a guitar. These guitarists are all the hot-shots now. They get up there with a guitar, and they string along and you sing, "Do Lord." And you can just feel the spiritual maturity pouring into you. You can just feel yourself expanding and growing. And the next time you show up, you just feel so close to the Lord. You wear a white shirt and white pants and white shoes. You're just white all over, inside and out. You're so glorious. It's all going there.

That's a bunch of baloney. "Do Lord" nothing. That's a cult technique. What is that going to get you? You're going to walk out Monday morning and say, "My spirituality is all gone. I've got to go back and get my friends together so we can share our mutual spiritual deficiency and our mutual spiritual ignorance." No, that is what churches teach you. I hope you will learn better. If you do, you will rise up and call me blessed in eternity for having called it to your attention, and you will curse the people (if you could in eternity) for having deceived you otherwise.

The only way that God is going to fill that spiritual deficiency is with the pastor-teacher, providing that he does his job, and providing that he knows what he's supposed to do. I'll tell you, folks, there are hundreds upon hundreds of pastors who never learned this in seminary. They don't know what they're supposed to do. We've got boxes of letters up there in that tape room of pastors who listen to the tapes on the pastor-teacher series, and suddenly, before their eyes, God opened it all up, and they realized for the first time, with all their seminary training, what in the world they were supposed to be doing with it. They came alive for Jesus Christ. They became teachers of the Word, filling up the deficiency in the soul of believers. And some of them write me sad letters and say, "My congregation just dismissed me." I said, "Fine, forget the slobs, and go on to the next group that the Lord will give you. They're going to be receptive to the Word of God. Those people will regret that for all eternity. You have lost nothing." They go on, and they start from scratch, and God builds them a group of people who are receptive to the Word. Those people go on and make an impact, not only on our world, and in their lives and in their family, but for themselves in all eternity.

It's a terrible thing not to have a pastor-teacher in a local congregation. Sometimes they have evangelists that become pastors. That's the kiss of death. It is a terrible thing to have a pastor who does not understand what his responsibility and his duty is toward that flock. The Lord Jesus put it very clearly to Peter: "Peter, feed My flock." So we've got all these preachers who are feeding what? The grain of food? The corn? No, they give them the husks: "Here's the husks. Eat this, little congregation. Here's a little social life for you. And here's another husk: I'm going to call attention to you in church, and everybody will pray for you. That's wonderful. And here's another little husk." And they keep throwing out these husks, and the poor Christians are sitting there gnawing on these husks, wondering why they're so spiritually malnourished. The reason they're suffering malnutrition is because they have no nutrition. That was a very dramatic statement: "Peter, feed My flock. I'm going to give you the ability with the pastor-teacher gift. There's only one thing you feed them for them to make it, and that is the doctrines of Scripture. Explain the Word of God."

Verse 12 is the key passage of all the Bible for all Christians who want to make it with rewards in heaven. It says, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." This verse 12 is structured upon what has been said in verse 11. At the end of verse 11, God has provided pastor-teachers. Now He has done that, and He's going to tell us why He has done that. If you run your eye through that verse 12, you will discover that there are three uses of the word "for." I have to go to the Greek Bible, because something important is told us in the Greek Bible that you miss completely in English.

This word "for" is what we grammatically call a preposition. In the Greek Bible, the first "for" is "pros." Then the next two uses of the word "for" are "eis." This is a chain reaction. When "pros" explodes, it triggers "eis" in the "for." And when the second "for" explodes, it triggers the next "eis" down the line. It's a chain reaction: "pros;" "eis;" and, "eis."" If, for some reason, "pros" is not set into motion (the first "for"), then nothing happens down below. So, the first "for" is very important, because if this does not happen for you in a local church, then there's no tomorrow for you in terms of blessing, either now (real blessing and real prosperity) or for rewards in heaven. You are back to zero.

This first "for" in the phrase "for the perfecting of the saints" is "pros." This preposition tells us the method by which the pastor-teacher is to do his work, because the word "pros" means "face-to-face." He is doing something with people face-to-face. That is what we do every time we gather in a public service. We are facing it off face-to-face with the pastor-teacher gift. You are being instructed directly by the Lord.

God the Holy Spirit will teach those of you who have confessed all known sins. You are in the status of the inner circle of fellowship. You are in the status of temporal fellowship. You are in the status of being teachable, and you will learn things. I don't have time here to go back through all the series of how you either learn things with your mind, and then you kill it right there; or, you go positive, and you believe it, and it's stored in your human spirit to cycle up and affect the facets of your soul: your mentality, as it makes decisions; your emotions; and, your will. That's another study in itself. But basically, it starts with you face-to-face, listening to the Word of God, and then making a positive volition response: yes; or, no, to the instruction that you have been given.

This is why it is so important for you to be here when instruction is given. That is why we read in Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the matter of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching." It is a very serious and stupid thing to not be in church when instruction is being given in the Word of God. I guarantee you that there are a lot of churches that you can go to, and you will not be the poorer for not having attended. In fact, you probably will be better off, because if you attend, you may have the idea that you have done something that God esteems. You may have the idea that you somehow have improved your spiritual condition and your spiritual status with the Lord. Whereas, if you stayed home, you might be more sensitive to your need. But the Word of God says that you are to be there when instruction is given, because that's the only way this first "for" can be executed. It can be supplemented by reading books, and it can be supplemented with tapes in a very great way, but it is still supplementary.

It is always amazing to me that we have people who are interested in visiting Berean church because they want to sit with face-to-face preaching. They use the tapes all the time – the same things you've heard previously. But there is a difference. Sometimes they don't understand it. They know how to put it in words. It's the word "pros." God says, "I've given you the local church. I've given you that organization for the age of grace to counter Satan's attempt to keep you ignorant of the gospel and to keep you from developing spiritually. I've given you this system with a completed canon of Scripture, and you have a pastor-teacher gift so that My mind, which is recorded in Scripture, he will transfer into your mind, to the extent that you're willing to learn. That's why we call it a grace system of perception. It's not how smart you are. It's how much you apply yourself.

**The Equipping of the Saints**

So, we have this first "for" for the purpose of doing what? Perfecting. The pastor-teacher is perfecting. That word is "katartismos." In the Greek Bible, "katartismos" means "to equip." This is a beautiful military term. It's a combat term. It's what everybody who ever goes into the military service does. He experiences getting equipped for combat, and the word to describe it is this Greek word "katartismos." It is God's way of equipping His people for spiritual combat. This is the goal of "pros." The goal of face-to-face teaching is to equip the people of God so that they are capable of doing spiritual combat. Ephesians 6:10-18 expand that provision of equipment, and you can go get a whole series of studies in part of the Philippians studies that explain to you in great detail how this equipment is provided for you. It is described there in that Ephesians 6 passage.

So, the pastor-teacher gets up, and in obedience to the Lord's instructions to Peter to feed his flock, he prepares those people for spiritual combat in the angelic warfare. God's angels are against the demons of Satan. It surrounds us every moment of every day of our lives. When Jesus Christ was here, those demons were attacking Him. He was the target. When He ascended and sat at the Father's right hand, we (His body) now became the target. And you, as individual believers, are under the guns of the demonic world in this spiritual warfare. Don't ever forget it. You are the target. I can guarantee that you'll be shot down unless you have been equipped for spiritual combat.

**Spiritual Combat Equipping**

Spiritual combat equipment does not mean sweet, inspirational talks. It means training in the knowledge of Bible doctrine truths. Those of you who think that getting some sweet, inspirational talks and challenges on good living and personal sacrifice from your pastor is instructing in the Word of God, you're sadly mistaken. That is not training in spiritual combat. There are some times when, in actual military life, you do stand up and you inspire your troops, and you do try to encourage them, particularly on the eve of battle, when you know that some of you are going to die, and some of you are going to live, and yet a duty must be performed. So you do give a so-called pep-talk – an inspiration talk. You try to give a rationale for what you're about to do.

However, that is meaningless unless that soldier knows how to use his rifle; unless he knows how to use that automatic weapon; unless he knows how to use the mortars; unless he understands the tactics that you're going to use; and, unless he is trained. It is even more useless if he's standing there in his underwear, and without any equipment ready to go into combat. I guarantee you that's a lousy way to fight. And that's what most Christians are doing. Some of them are fighting in their underwear. ... So, that is what's called stripped-down. We've got these stripped-down model Christians who are going to do the Lord's work, and they're going to do spiritual combat, because somebody along the line failed them in executing the first "for" – face-to-face instruction in the categories of doctrine in such a way that they understand it and can apply to their lives.

So, when a Wellhausen comes along and says to them, "I want to tell you that I have gone to the university, and I have rubbed shoulders with the elite IQs of our age, and through my prayer life, I have come to a great insight concerning Scripture. It's a book that a bunch of men wrote together, and it was pasted together in various forms. It has nothing to do with a supernatural production (God made it). Therefore, these poor men included certain errors and mistakes. So, that does not mean that the Bible is inerrant, and that you have to believe everything that's in it. You've got to use your head and see whether what the Bible says makes sense or not before you throw yourself on it." If you have been trained by your pastor-teacher, you look at George Wellhausen with all of his degrees and say, "George, you're very wrong in that. Satan has deceived you. That's a line of poison, and I'm not going to fall for it, and I pity you if that's what you think. When we get out there, we're going to find out who's right, George: you; or, we, who believe what the Bible says. When you find out how wrong you are, it's going to be too late to retrace your steps, and you will suffer the consequences." All the way down the line, if the job of equipping has been done, you know how to fight the battle. You're prepared to do it.

**Saints**

So, every Christian needs this kind of preparation. That's why he says, "For the equipping of the saints." Who are the saints? The Greek Bible says the "hagios." Who are the saints? It's not like the Roman Catholic Church says: super spiritual and holy people. There are still people who think that some of us are saints, and some of us are not. Every believer is a saint, because to be a saint means you are in Christ. Everybody who believes (who trusted) in the Lord Jesus Christ is baptized immediately by the Holy Spirit into Christ, and he is a saint. The word "holy" means "to be set apart." It refers to those who hold this positional truth in Christ. You are a saint.

So, whatever your name is, put the word "saint" in front of it. If your name happens to be Bernard Rouch, then it is going to sound a little funny: "Saint Bernard." Nevertheless, that is it. Put a "saint" in front of your name, and that's what you are. You are a set-apart human being, and you never will be anything else but that. You may be a very crummy saint. You may be a very ungodly saint. We have the books of 1 and 2 Corinthians which describe a whole church that was like that. Yet, that book of 1 Corinthians is such a dire attack upon a local church congregation because of the sin that was going on in that church, and the opening verses pronounce them to be saints.

A saint is someone who is in Christ. It has nothing to do with how well you live, or how well you don't live. God will deal with that in disciplinary matters. So, this is for you people who are members of the body of Christ. Every one of you is to be trained in the Word of God.

We translate it this way: "Face-to-face, with training and equipping the saints for combat."

Having done that, we come to the second preposition (the second "for"), which is "eis." If you have been trained and equipped for spiritual combat through the teaching ministry of the pastor-teacher; if you have been open and receptive; if you have been a student of the Word of God; if, just as you ate on physical food every day, so you spend time learning the Scriptures every day; if you listen to tapes; and, if you fed your soul on a daily basis, you have grown. Please remember that you're not going to go to spiritual maturity overnight. If you start from zero, it'll take a couple of years of daily, concentrated dosage of the Word of God for you to begin to get anywhere in terms of spiritual maturity. But having done that, and having prepared that maturity, we come to the second "for".

**Christian Service**

What this word "eis" actually means, in this case, is "resulting in." And that's how we translate this: "face-to-face communication: resulting in." So, once the pastor-teacher has done his job, then the congregation has an opportunity for a benefit. It says, "Resulting in the work of the ministry." The word "work" is the Greek word "ergon." "Ergon" in the Scripture here refers to a product of activity – to an activity, or to the product of that activity. It is referring here to an activity of service as a Christian. He calls this specifically "the work of the ministry." The Greek word for "ministry" is "diakonia." "Diakonia" is the word which is used in Scripture for various kinds of services. It is used of Christian service. It refers here to your personal service in the body of Christ, the church.

What he's is talking about here is *their* ministry. Dr. Chafer at Dallas Seminary used to like to read that in class this way. He would say, "For the face-to-face equipping of the saints, for the work of *their* ministry," in order to make it clear to us, who were destined to be pastor-teachers, that the ministry that we were preparing for was not our ministry, but our ministry was to prepare the people of God for *their* ministry. That is where the ministry lay. He was trying to convey to us that the work of the Lord is not upon the preacher's shoulder. It is upon the shoulders of the members in the congregation. But if they are not prepared for their ministry, then there's no work that's going to be done.

So, without a pastor-teacher gift in a local church functioning under the grace system of perception (teaching the flock), there can be no spiritual maturing of the believer, and thus no divine good service, and thus no rewards in eternity. I can guarantee you that Satan is a supreme master at short-circuiting God's system in the local church for the maturing and the divine production of believers. He short-circuits it at the point of the preacher. He keeps the preacher from doing his job.

The pastor must do his face-to-face teaching on the basis of the languages of the Bible (not the English, or the Spanish, or the German, or whatever) – the Greek and Hebrew texts of Scripture. So, you are listening to the words of God the Holy Spirit, not the preacher's opinion. If he has done his job (he has equipped you for spiritual combat), and you have been positive and receptive to that spiritually equipping, then the result is that you are in a position where you are capable of doing divine good production. You are capable of being led by the Holy Spirit to produce divine good service.

**Edifying of the Body of Christ**

Then we come to the third "for," which is again the word "eis," which again means "resulting in," and a third thing will result this time. This is resulting in the edifying of the body of Christ. The word "edifying" looks like this in Greek: "oikodome." "Oikodome" means "the act of building something." When he says, "The edifying of the body," he's talking about the act of building something. This means erecting a spiritual maturity structure in your soul. And a means for building spiritual maturity structure in your soul is that grace system of perception based on information from the pastor-teacher. So, within your soul, you have built grace orientation; you have built the facet of a relaxed mental attitude; you have built a mastery of the details of life (you know how to handle your money and your material things); you have built the capacity to love; and, you have built inner happiness. These are the five facets of which Paul, in 2 Corinthians says, "This is what I glory in." This is spiritual maturity. It is a building action on your part because the pastor-teacher has equipped you. You are capable of divine good production, and the result is that you are edifying (you are building up) the body of Christ. Without the spiritual maturity structure in the soul, there is little possibility of divine good service, and thus little possibility of storing treasures in heaven.

No divine good service is the victory that Satan seeks over all of us. The immature soldier is a horrible disaster in combat, and that's exactly what the devil is doing. The devil is giving us people in the pulpit who are challenging the people to go out there and "Serve the Lord," because the devil knows that if they go out there until He has equipped them, he'll shoot them full of holes so fast that they'll come dragging their tails behind them back into camp, completely defeated. This is to the body of Christ, which refers to the church (the church age believers) seeking a spiritually mature congregation. Ephesians 2:22-23 and Colossians 1:18 tell us that the body of Christ is the church.

Here's the divine goal of all this. What is a local church trying to do? Acts 9:31 puts it all together: "Then the churches had rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified ('oikodome')." How? They had pastor-teachers who were doing their job of instructing in doctrine? People were learning the Word. People were developing an orientation to divine viewpoint: "They were edified, and walking in the fear (or the respect) of the Lord." Even though they knew they were saved by grace; even though they knew they could never again be lost; and, even though they knew that no matter what terrible sin they committed, they were still going to heaven. They also knew that the hand of God's discipline was severe, and they knew that they had to walk in respect and fear of this Holy God. They knew that God was not going to contaminate His integrity with disobedient children in His family: "And in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied." This is a church functioning on the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It is very sad how much talk we hear about people being led by the Holy Spirit, and how little explanation people have as to how they can be led by the Holy Spirit. You have had that explanation here. As this chain reaction is set in motion in your life, you will have the equipment with which the Spirit of God will lead you, and it will well up from within your human spirit automatically, almost without your thinking. You will know what to do; your decisions will be right; your feelings will be right; your will will be right; and, your thinking will be right. Everything will click in conformity to God's ways, because you have been programmed with the Word of God.

We close with Ephesians 4:13-16. When this chain reaction is set in motion, here is the result: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and in the knowledge of the Son of God into a perfect man (a mature man) unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men and cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive." It is very exhilarating to be able to walk through the Christian life and not be a sucker to anybody's crazy doctrines that they bring up. You will not be a fool when somebody with some glib personality gets up on television and starts pouring out his human good or his emotional guff. You're not taken in by it, even if he has a big denomination and a lot of money behind him. It is so exhilarating to know that you're thinking God's thoughts after Him, and you're a discerning person.

Verse 15: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, make increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." The whole local congregation gets knit together into a terrific impact for the Lord. There are some congregations that if everybody died, including the preacher, nobody would miss them. It would make a little upset, and the morticians would have a field day, but after that, nobody would miss them. They'd go right on. There are other congregations that if, suddenly, they were to disappear, there would be people everywhere who would know that they had suffered an immense, immeasurable loss that will affect even their eternity.

How do you get a congregation like? By a pastor-teacher who knows his business; who knows his stuff; who will take the guff; who will stand the strain; and, who will get out there and crank out the Word of Truth to those who want to be positive and to those who want to be receptive. The Word of God has said to us, "The field is ripe for harvest." The problem is not receptive people. They're everywhere. The problem is shepherds who are ready to get out there and feed the flock. You, in this congregation, are part of the shepherds who are doing the feeding. God bless you.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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