***The Gold of the Word of God

RV64-02***

Please turn once more to Revelation 3:14-22 as we continue our study of the letter to Laodicea. As we have seen, the church members in Laodicea saw themselves as prosperous and blessed by God, while Jesus Christ saw them as destitute and in reversionism. This is the perennial hazard of the Christian life; that is, to evaluate our spiritual status by human viewpoint standards instead of by God's divine viewpoint. All of us are faced with this. All of us are tempted to look at ourselves, as the Scripture says, "More highly than we ought to."

The Lord Jesus Christ saw that that was happening in Laodicea. So, he warned these Christians that they were in a status of reversionism. This was particularly evidenced in their case by the fact that they had a lack of a mastery of the details of life. They had temporal things above eternal things in their frame of values. So, reversionism is a very costly thing in terms of internal rewards. But it is also a great loss in terms of blessing for the time that the believer is here on this earth.

**Advice**

In Revelation 3:18, that we look at now, the Lord Jesus Christ deals with three characteristics of these Laodicean Christians that need to be corrected. If these three are corrected, everything else will fall in line. They happen to be the three characteristics that he mentioned last in verse 17. He said to them that they were poor – not rich the way they thought they were; they were blind – not intellectually perceptive and very wise, as they thought they were; and, they were naked – not well-dressed as they assumed themselves to be. The Lord takes these features one-at-a-time in order to give them some advice on what they should do with it.

So, we begin verse 18: "I counsel you to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich." "I counsel you." The word "counsel" in the Greek Bible looks like this: It's the word "sumbouleuo." This word means "to advise." That's a better translation. This is not a command from the Lord Jesus Christ when He says, "I counsel thee." He says, "I'm going to give you some advice. You might want to take it, or you might want to ignore it. But I'm going to give you some good advice. It's like when you watch somebody who i's doing something that is self-destructive, you know that they're acting in a way that's very unwise. You know that they're going to regret what they're doing. You say to them, "Let me give you a little advice." It has that connotation of concern, but also that connotation of awareness that you're on a self-destructive course, and you may not want to change, but at least I'm going to make an effort to save you from some grief. So you say, "Let me give you a little advice." That's what the Lord Jesus is saying here, almost in a confidential tone, "Let me give you a little advice relative to the condition in which I see you in comparison to how you see yourself."

This is the present tense in the Greek language, which means that this is a principle of advice that is always true, particularly of believers who are in reversionism. Every believer who has fallen out of fellowship with God the father needs to come around to this particular bit of advice. It's in the active voice, which means that Jesus Christ Himself is giving the advice. He is the originator of it. It's in the indicative mood, which means that here is a statement of truth. He says, "I want to advise you." The word "the" is the personal pronoun in the Greek language: "ego." It refers here specifically to the pastor-teacher and the local church combined. They are being viewed now as a whole. While the pastor-teacher, we have noticed in this letter, is directly addressed, by the very grammar that's used, nevertheless, he is being addressed in behalf of this church. They are in the place that they are in, in large measure, because of what he has been doing or has not been doing.

**Buy Something**

So, now he lumps them together, and he says, "I am advising you (the whole church – from the pastor on down) to buy something." The Greek word is "agorazo." "Agorazo" is the word for doing business in the marketplace. It means to buy and to sell things. One place that it is used in the Bible, for example, is in Matthew 14. This will give you an idea of how this very same word is used: "When it was evening, His disciples came to Him (that is, to Jesus) saying, 'This is a desert place, and the time is now late. Send the multitude away that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.'" The word "buy" is this word "agorazo" – and do business; that is, in order to get food: "Send them into the village so they can secure some food by buying it." The Laodicean church lived, as you know, in a great business center. It was one of the great commercial centers of the ancient world. So, they could relate to a business proposition. That's the way the Lord is approaching them. He says, "Let me give you some advice. I'm going to give you a little business proposition. What you need to do is to go out and buy something."

He is going to advise them to purchase something which will meet their dire spiritual need. It will correct the spiritual destitution under which they find themselves. That's the word. They were "destitute." These people were spiritually broke, practically down to the end of the line. They were completely bankrupt, almost, in every sense. So, the Lord is advising them to buy something to meet the spiritual destitution.

This word "agorazo" is in the aorist tense, which means at the point where they finally wake up and realize that they have a spiritual need. That's always the problem. Very often, other people can sense our spiritual needs before we do ourselves. They can see where we're heading, and the problems that we're creating for ourselves before we do. And at some point in time, it's necessary for us to wake up. At the point where these people wake up, then the Lord says, "Take this action." That's why that's aorist tense. It is active voice. Obviously, the Laodicean Christians must take the action to return from the destitution of reversionism. That's what has caused the problem. When they backslid into reversionism, they created all of these conditions under which they are now existing.

It's in the infinitive mood. Infinitive here tells us that the Lord's purpose for these people is to return to spiritual prosperity. God never intends (the Lord Jesus never intends) for those of us who are members of his royal family to live in any kind of poverty situation. He has promised to give us sufficient operating needs – logistical grace. He'll give us supplying grace. He'll give us what we need to survive. Then, to the degree that we have moved toward super grace, He will give us more abundantly. He will overflow us with provisions of prosperity.

That is the point. That is the goal. It is not the Lord's purpose for people to lack prosperity in every way. The infinitive here makes it very clear that the Lord's purpose for his church in Laodicea was for them to prosper. He wanted them to prosper materially, but they had to prosper, along with it, in the spiritual sense. If they did not prosper spiritually, they could not handle their material prosperity. That's where people get into trouble with money. When you don't have the spiritual capacity, then the money will be abused. Then the money will be used in a self-destructive way.

**From Jesus Christ**

Specifically, the Lord says, "I'm advising you to buy something," and He tells them exactly where to buy it. He says, "You have to buy it from Me." The word "from" is the Greek preposition "para." That indicates origin. The word "Me" is again the personal pronoun "ego," referring to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in the Greek Bible, these words stand in an emphatic position. When you read this in the Greek sentence, these words are hammered home to you that Jesus was saying, "I'm going to advise you to buy something, and I want to make it clear that the place you have to buy it is from Me. There is nobody else in the marketplace from whom you can buy this. When you walk in to correct the problem of your spiritual destitution, I'm the only one to whom you can come to purchase what you need."

**Gold**

And what He advises them to purchase, He calls "gold." The word in the Greek is "chrusion." "Chrusion" is a noun. Now, it's not exactly the word for "gold." It is related to "gold," but it is the word for gold that is applied to what you make from gold: ornaments; or, coins. This is the product of the substance of gold. So, here, the Lord, speaking in symbolic language, is telling them to buy something that has infinite intrinsic worth, but also something that is the product of that intrinsic worth. Just to clue you in a little ahead, the product of that intrinsic worth is going to be spiritual maturity structure in your soul. The gold is Bible doctrine, out of which that spiritual maturity structure is made. That is just to brief you on the background here, as we will go into it a little more in detail.

So, this is interesting. He uses this word "chrusion," a noun, that talks about something that's an ornamentation. It is something that makes you look attractive. And the most attractive thing about a human being is spiritual maturity in his soul. Nothing makes a person more attractive. You'll notice this, particularly in people who aren't particularly physically attractive. They are not particularly physically attractive, and yet, people are drawn to them; people have a respect for them; and, people have an interest in what they say, and in their thinking, and in their ideas. Why? It's not because they're some famous entertainment personality – a glittering appearing star. But it is because they have something internal that comes through the windows of the soul, through the physical eyes of the body. In this person, you can see something that is winsome, and that has been made out of the gold of doctrine, and now resides upon this person as an ornament. Gold is a substance. But what the Lord is advising them to purchase is something that is an ornamentation made out of the substance of divine truth.

**Purified**

This gold is a special kind. He identifies it in verse 18 as, "Gold which has been tried in fire." The word "tried" is this Greek word "puroo." "Puroo" means "refining by burning" – by burning off the impurities. So, we translate this "to be purified." That is the idea. And you know that if you have gold, you purify it. This is one of the processes for securing gold. You take gold, and you melt it down. There are various things that are associated with it. Then you have to go through a process of purifying – of separating the gold from the other elements that it usually is mixed with when you find it in its natural state.

This tense here is perfect, which means that this has been done to the gold in the past, and it has remained refined and pure. Whatever gold represents here, that has had action by God upon it in the past, so that it is pure and refined, and it continues so. It is passive, which means that this gold received this action. It is a participle. A spiritual principle is stated:

"That you may buy gold which has been purified in fire." Actually, the word "in" is "ek," which means "out from within." It's a preposition from within. The thing that it has been purified within is "pur," which is a word for "fire." Then He gives the reason why they should seek this kind of refined gold. "That" ("hina") is the Greek conjunction, indicating the purpose for buying this kind of refined gold. This is so that they could be what they all wanted to be in Laodicea – what they were all pushing so hard to be; that is, to be "plouteo" (to be rich). This refers to the possession of wealth. The Laodicean Christians thought they were rich, but Jesus Christ said, "You're poor." So, He's taking that problem they have – that they think they're rich when they are poor. They think that they're well-off when they're not. They think they have some kind of quality when they're indeed very gross and very base. This is a terrible problem in the Christian life – to be able to evaluate your own spiritual status relative to how rich you are.

Now, do you want to be rich? The Lord Jesus says, "Let me give you some advice. What you need to do is to buy something that only I can supply. What you need to buy from Me is a gold which has been totally refined. With this possession, you will become rich." He wants them to be truly rich. This is aorist tense. Their condition as a whole will be that they will be rich people. It is active voice. That indicates that they will personally be rich – not the congregation, but Joe and Sam and Suzy and Mary, as individuals within the congregation, will personally have this fantastic wealth.

But it is in that subjunctive mode, which, in the Greek language, tells us that maybe it will, and maybe it won't. This is potential for you to do, but you may choose to remain in your reversionist poverty. If you don't take action to return, you're going to keep thinking you're rich when you're as poor as a hound dog without fleas. You're just plain poor.

So, that brings up the subject of the nature of this genuine wealth. What is it that the Lord is advising them to buy? The advice here is to buy spiritual wealth, and that immediately strikes us as rather odd. We have vast religious systems, such as the Roman Catholic Church, for example, that actually promote this deception that spiritual things can be bought. Vast sums of money are poured into the coffers of the Roman Church, especially by people whose loved ones have died. Then the question seriously comes up: where is this father? Where is this son? Where is this mother? Where is this daughter? And they have a concern for the status of pain and suffering and punishment that they are going through. The Roman Catholic Church says, "We have an answer for that. What you need is some spiritual help. We have a special this week: $5.75 for two-and-a-half masses. For $10, you get three." They actually sell spiritual wealth.

That's what this sounds like that Jesus says you want to buy. He's talking to these people because they're business people. They're in a commercial center. Everybody talks about buying and selling. They're all interested in what goes on down there in the "agora" (the marketplace). That's on everybody's lips and on everybody's mind. So, Jesus says, "I'll talk to you in terminology that you're used to using. I'll tell you to buy something. What you need to buy is some spiritual wealth that you think you have, but you don't have.

**Isaiah 55**

We may get a frame of reference for that concept of buying spiritual wealth if you turn to Isaiah 55:1. This is very fantastic in the Word of God. Here is a declaration on how to buy spiritual wealth. Right off the bat, in verse 1, Isaiah makes it clear: "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters (the waters of life is what he's talking about), and he that has no money: come; buy; and, eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

**Faith**

What Isaiah says right off the bat is that you can buy spiritual things without money – without your gold; silver; or, anything else. The way you buy it, without the coin of the realm, is with the coin of believing God. That's how you buy spiritual things. "If you want to talk in business terms, we'll talk in business terms. Do you want to buy spiritual wealth? We'll talk about buying spiritual wealth. But the coin with which you buy it is believing God. Faith is the coin."

Isaiah goes on and says, "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which doesn't satisfy?" Even Israel of old was on a mad chase for happiness and satisfaction. They were hustling around to find happiness. They were spending their happiness at restaurants. They had held a local option, and all the restaurants sold booze, and it still didn't make them happy. It made them act stupid, and it made them dangerous once they walked out and got in their chariots and started driving.

He says, "What are you buying? You're using your money and you're buying this bread. You're buying all this good food. Is that making you happy?" How many of you are on a jag of seeking happiness by the food you can eat, and the restaurants you can go to, and your labor for that which doesn't satisfy? When you spend your money, you have spent part of your life that you secured by your labor, and you're spending it for this thing, and that thing, and nothing satisfies.

"Hearken diligently after me, and eat that which is good. Let your soul light itself in fatness." If you want happiness, and if you don't want to have to be on a mad chase to find happiness, then start feeding your soul, and let your soul get fat. On what? On the Word of God – on that precious gold of doctrine: "Incline your ear, and come unto Me. Hear, and your soul shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." The Word of God made very specific promises to Israel, and enunciated those through the great King David.

Verse 4: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and a commander to the people." God had said, "You can trust my promises, and I'm going to see that you're informed. I'm going to give you people who can tell you the truth. I'm going to give you leaders who can point you in the right direction. That's all they can do. They will say, "There is the straight and narrow path of your Christian life to the celestial city. There is the way of security and maximum blessing and reward."

Verse 5: "Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and nations that didn't know you shall run unto you because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified you" – the Holy One of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. God says, "I'm going to exalt those of you in this nation who obey what I have told you – who obey My Word."

**The Word of God**

Notice verses 6 and 7: "Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near." Return from your reversionism: "Let the wicked forsake His way, and the unrighteous man His thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Israel of old was faced with mental attitude sins. He says, "Turn around. Change your thoughts. Purify them with the Word of God. Change your overt wickedness. Stop doing what is wrong. Stop doing the things that the Word of God condemns. Stop living in a dream world where you think that God is not aware of what you're doing, and that God is ignoring it.

Verses 8 and 9 tell us that God's divine viewpoint is alien to any mind which does not have doctrine in it: "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways My way,' says the Lord." Do you see that? So, how in the world are you going to be able to think God's thoughts unless you have the Word of God in your mind? That's the only way. By nature, you do not have it.

Verse 9: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. That is the vast difference between human viewpoint and divine viewpoint. How often we forget that God's divine viewpoint, which we can possess, is as high above the earth as the heavens are. There is no comparison. Do you wonder why the high-IQ people of our society, who function on human viewpoint, find it impossible to grasp the wisdom of believers who are oriented to God's truth? The Christians are so far superior intellectually to them, that the lowbrow, human viewpoint high-IQ can't grasp what they're saying. They actually think they're right. They're like these Laodiceans. The human viewpoint people today think they're so right, and they're so oriented to reality. God says, "You couldn't be farther from the truth."

Verses 10 and 11 tell us that the Bible doctrine in the soul brings real wealth into one's life: "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and does not return, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth the bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so, shall My Word be that goes forth out of My mouth. It shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where I sent it." What a promise! This is personal prosperity through the Word of God in your human spirit. So, there is truth to go up to your thinking. There is truth to guide your soul.

Then in verses 12 and 13, we are told that the spiritual maturity structure type believer is certain to be rich with personal happiness. He will not be on a frantic search for happiness: "For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." What a picture of joy! "The hills are alive with the sound of music." That's what he's singing. It's just every place you look. Nature is going to be singing forth for the doctrinally oriented person. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree. And it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

**Spiritual Maturity**

So, Isaiah 55 very effectively explains to us how one buys spiritual wealth, and what that spiritual wealth is. The refined gold that Jesus Christ offers is the mind of God as it is revealed in the Word of God. That is the gold. As this gold is used to build the ornamentation of spiritual maturity within one's soul, we receive the beauties and the happiness that such ornamentation brings to the individual believer.

David understood this. In Psalm 19:7-11, he makes this very comparison. David says," The law of the Lord is perfect (that is, the Word of God), converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord (doctrine) is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord (the principles of doctrine) are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord (the principles of truth – the specific guidelines) is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Then, in verse 10, he makes the comparison: "More to be desired (doctrine) are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey in the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is Your servant warned: and in keeping of them, there is great reward." Do you want to be rich with real wealth? It's easy to say that, isn't it? I've noticed that the people who run around saying, "Money isn't everything" are those who have a lot of it. Nevertheless, that happens to be a great truth. Money is not everything. It's something, but it is not real wealth. That's all that the Lord Jesus is trying to tell the Laodicean Christians. There is real wealth. That's what David had grasped. That's what he's singing about here when he says that for those, who are warned by what the Word of God says, and they're positive to it, and keep what the Word of God says, there is great reward.

**Bible Doctrine**

On the opposite side, for those who violate, and for those who reject the Word of God, there's great misery. You can count on it. There is great misery. For some people, that is the course that they seem to be doomed to. They are just so negative that they will not turn around. They will not go from misery to blessing. The refined gold that David sang of was the Word of God, and he compares doctrine to fine pure gold. Nothing is more valuable to a human being than the truth of God's word.

Such spiritual wealth, David says, brings genuine happiness. There is no frantic search for satisfaction and happiness. Doctrine is like gold refined in fire because it has passed through God's holiness. The Word of God reflects the integrity of God. Doctrine reflects the integrity of God. God's holiness has acted in judgment upon His truth. Therefore, this Word is God's Truth.

In Psalm 12:6, we have this comparison with silver: "The words of the Lord are pure words: like silver tested in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." There you have the same idea that when the Lord Jesus speaks about refined gold, speaking of the Word of God, He is comparing it to metals which have been purified in a furnace, here reflecting the judgment of God's own integrity.

That kind of spiritual wealth is going to give you a real sense of security, and a very great sense of peace. Everything about our Lord exalted this gold. Jesus knew what He was talking about when He told these Laodiceans, "I've got something that I can give you. You can buy it from Me. Faith is the coin. What you will get from Me will be the refined gold of doctrine. You will have the mind of God. You will have truth."

It is interesting if you have you ever noticed the connection that I think is so fascinating and so instructive. Notice the very last breath of Jesus Christ on the cross, recorded in Luke 23:46, which is part of the background of the advice that he's giving to the Laodiceans: "When Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit.' Having said this, He gave up the spirit." This is describing the point at which Jesus Christ had now completed all that was necessary on the cross in His spiritual death. Now, He was adding the physical death to complete that payment. Now He gave up His life. And at the moment that He does this: Here He is, hanging on the cross; fully rational; fully and completely in grasp of His mental processes, and what does His mind go back to? His mind goes back to the refined gold of doctrine. He reaches back into Psalm 31:5, and He makes a quotation. The last thing He does is that He quotes a Bible verse with his last breath, and tells us something very tremendous in the process of that quotation.

Here is the verse that Jesus was quoting. David says, "Into Your hand I commend My Spirit." That's the quotation. The Lord stopped there. But behind that statement, the complete statement, which was also in the mind of Jesus Christ, and was the basis of His confidence at the point of death, and His confidence in commending himself to God the Father, is expressed in the rest of that verse in Psalm 31: "Into Your hand I commend My Spirit. You have redeemed Me, O, Lord God of Truth" (O Jehovah Elohim of Truth). And you could translate the word "truth" with the word "doctrine," because that's what it means: "O, Jehovah Elohim (the highest and most dignified name of God): doctrine." That's rather fascinating. This is the very last statement in the mind of Jesus Christ. This is a statement that is going to be held with great significance by those who knew Him, and by those who hear Him utter these words. Here he is quoting Psalm 31:5.

They recognize it, and they are going to turn back in their Old Testament Bibles; they're going to find that psalm; and, they're going to read that verse. They get the whole impact of what Jesus Christ was saying in His dying moment. His happiness and His stability in His suffering and His death was based upon Bible doctrine in His human spirit. This was the last thing He said before He gave up His life physically after all the suffering. Don't forget that He's on that cross now, a beaten pulp of a human being, with agonies beyond most human comprehension. He is about to give up His life, and the thing that He rejoices in (and almost as if He is signaling to us, His royal family – the anchor point to which we attach to our lives) is revealed when He quotes Psalm 31:5 which exalts God as the God of doctrine. The Lord Jesus Christ knew with Whom He was dealing and trusting, and that is wealth.

When you know the God with whom you are dealing, you are a really rich person. I'll tell you that there are few Christians who know Him. Few of us know this God. Most of us have a hard time even remembering some of His basic characteristics so that we know His essence, which in itself would be a great encouragement to us, and help in knowing Him. But those who know Him are the rich ones, and the only way you know Him is through doctrine.

That's what Jesus is telling the Laodiceans: "You're a poor and beggarly lot. I want you to buy from Me. I'm the source of this truth. I have made it possible for you. My victory on the cross was a strategic victory that enables you to have a tactical victory in the field. I want you to exploit My victory on the cross. I want you to grab this beachhead that I have made, and I want you to grab the flag, and run, and take the high ground of super grace living. I want you to move into the victorious life that I have made possible for you. I have set the ground, and I can deliver it to you, because I have secured it on the basis of a God of truth.

**Wealth**

What the Lord wants us to do, as His royal family, is to exploit His victory on the cross, and our own personal victories in the purchase of the gold of doctrine with the coin of positive volition faith. God's word is the supreme wealth of the universe. If you have that, you're a rich person. If you don't have it, and think you're rich, you're as big a fool as the people in Laodicea, and that is the word for you. And if you think you can go along day-by-day without concerning yourself with the wealth of the Word of God, you're a very foolish person.

Psalm 138:132 says, "I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your loving kindness, and for Your truth. For you have magnified Your Word above all Your name." God says, "I magnify My doctrine above all of My character as the Holy God. I exalted My Word and My doctrine above all else.

There are a lot of Christians who've been running around the last few days all agog about money market funds, and about special saver funds, and about all the investments, and all the latest way to promote their spiritual well-being. Some of them have done so well, and they think that they're so well off. And a lot of them are in exactly the position that the Laodiceans were in. They have something in the bank, and nothing in the soul. And the Lord says, "You're poor. You're destitute. You're a zero." And one of these days, those old eyes of yours are going to close in death. You're going to be moved out of this world, and you're going to see how very quickly everything that you have, that you thought made you wealthy, is left behind, and you are a zero. Then you will walk into God's presence, and then your checkbook will really be opened for the wealth that you possess. What do you have? The spiritual maturity structure that you have built in your soul. That is the wealth that you take into eternity, and that's all.

The Lord Jesus says, "Buy of Me gold that has been refined by the holiness and the integrity of God, and you shall really be wealthy. No matter how little you have materially, you will be rich forever. Remember that forever is an awfully long time. I'm not talking about you having something that just falls together in a wonderful way. We're going to be making some fantastic big decisions here. You've got a big burden on your shoulders here at this business meeting tonight in terms of material moves. But that's nothing. That's going to be gone. That's going to be left behind. The things that we are going to take with us are the spiritual possessions that these material means make it possible for us to secure. That's all the material is good for. It enables us to secure the real spiritual gold. If you're not wealthy in that, you don't have anything.

**The Bible**

Let me summarize it for you. Jesus is talking about the study of the Bible. Let's put it in simple terms. He's talking about the gold that resides in the Word of God. As you know, the Word of God indicates to us that every Christian is his own priest, and therefore, you are responsible for your own spiritual well-being. In 1 Peter 2:9, this principle of personal priesthood responsibility is stated, where Peter says, "You are a chosen generation. You are a royal priesthood (you're in the royal family of God, and you're a royal priesthood), a holy nation, a people of His own, that you should show forth the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." He is speaking about the church – the body of Christ. Every one of us here today is his own priest. Your pastor-teacher will be responsible before God for what he gave you in terms of the materials to execute your priesthood, but that's as far as he's responsible. You will be responsible for what you have done with the material of truth that you were given, and how you executed your own priesthood.

God provides for the spiritual well-being, but it is the believer who must proceed to secure that spiritual wealth. The Bible indicates that our spiritual life has to be nurtured on a regular basis. Matthew 4:4 tells us that, "We do not live by bread alone, but we live by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Obviously, the principle is daily living in the Word. Most of us will find that that strikes a chord of some tinge of conscience and condemnation. It is so easy to go day-by-day without living in the Word. It is so easy not to spend time in the Word of God. The tragedy of that is that the same people who do not spend time in the Word of God are the people who, when you get into their car and you turn on the ignition, out comes blaring some rock-n-roll music. So, you know exactly how they're spending their time between stops on the road, when they could be hearing the voice of their pastor-teacher coming out of a tape, and they might even learn something. This is such a little way to waste your time, isn't it? Everybody has to go someplace.

My refugee friend from Czechoslovakia told me the other day when I met him that one of the things that it was hard for him to adjust to in this country was transportation. He was still having to adjust to the fact that every place you went, you had to have wheels. In Czechoslovakia, they hardly know what a wheel looks like, let alone to own one. That's how it is in the worker's paradise. The quality of being able to have a way of getting around is inherent in our life. We have to travel. And learning the Word of God through tapes gives us a dimension of an opportunity for entrance into the Word of God that Christians in other generations have not had. The Bible makes it clear: Feed upon the Word of God on a daily basis. So, for every Christian: for maximum blessing; for stability; for productivity; and, for divine viewpoint, it is living in the world on a daily basis that is required.

One of the things that the Bible does stress to us is that we cannot settle for knowing a nice Scripture verse here and there. In Acts 20:27, the apostle Paul declared that his ministry was anchored to this principle: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." That is the goal of the Christian life – to know all the counsel of God. Most Christians know a few snatches of the Word of God. Most Christians sit in churches Sunday after Sunday where they hear only one message: how to go to heaven. And most of those same Christians, if they were ever confronted with a person who needed very quickly to know how to go to heaven, couldn't do it.

Have you ever imagine yourself in a position where you had somebody who was dying on your hands, and you didn't know how long they were going to survive, and you had to explain the gospel to them? How would you do it? Do you understand? Would you say, "Well, I want to tell you there are four laws? Number one is that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life? Number two ..." Would you know exactly what to tell that person? That is a very eerie situation. I was in that situation once. You may be talking to a person that keeps passing out, so that you think that they have died. Then they revive, and you get another chance. That is an eerie and a burdensome position if you don't know what on earth this person needs to know.

It's fantastic how ignorant people are about how to tell people just how to go to heaven. That's knowing the full counsel of the Word of God. It's knowing everything that God has for you as a believer. The average Christian knows nothing about the grace of God and His privileges as being a member of the church, the royal family of God.

Some of you are beginning to walk around with your heads a little higher and your shoulders back. And I notice that some of you have been practicing walking at home with books on your head so that you look like you're walking like royalty now. You stop bobbing up and down. Any day now, you'll be coming in here with a robe on your shoulders. But that's alright. You have at least grasped the fact that you should act like what you are, which is God's royalty. And royalty requires a knowledge of the Word of God. Getting God's divine viewpoint on a daily basis is what it's all about.

In Psalm 119:11, it is put this way: "I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You." The technique of daily Bible study pursues a systematic survey of Bible revelation on a verse-by-verse basis. Maximum knowledge of the Word of God is secured when you go through a book of the Bible, systematically, one verse at a time. That way you bring the categories together. It is not done by preaching that skips around.

Isaiah 28:10 lays out this principle for growth in the Word of God. Here's how you develop the full counsel of the Word of God. Here's how you secure the refined gold of doctrine in your soul: "For precept must be upon precept" (line-upon-line): here a little, and there a little. That's how you do it. You go systematically, one bit after another, and you listen to the teaching that explains the Word of God to you.

So, this is your opportunity: to follow in what I don't know how many Laodiceans followed, but was the invitation of the Lord: "Come unto Me. Buy from Me (with the coin of positive volition – faith) the gold of truth (truth which has been refined by the holiness of God so that you know it is true truth), and from that truth you will become wealthy because that is the real gold." Whatever else you may have materially, the only wealth you have is the truth of God's doctrinal propositions in your soul, stored in your human spirit. That is what you will take when you die and go into eternity. For all eternity, you will have this possession of wealth. You will never lose it; you will always prosper with it; you will always enjoy it; and, it will always maximize your happiness. You have that kind of gold. You are indeed a person who is to be respected, admired, and envied, because you've got it all.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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