

(Presenting Christ #3) Fullness and Glory

by Dana Congdon

The sermon emphasizes the concept of fullness and glory, where Christ is the center of all creation, and the church grows up into the fullness of Christ.

Duration: 1:26:12

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Acts 2:42, Ephesians 1:9-10, Ephesians 1:22, Hebrews 12:2, Revelation 22:17

Topics: "Glory Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker encourages listeners to pursue the glory of God, even in the midst of tribulation. He emphasizes the importance of taking personal responsibility and owning up to one's own faults. The speaker also highlights the urgency of the times, urging the church to be ready for the Lord's return and to gather people to Him. The sermon concludes with a vision of the church in fullness, inviting others to come and experience the beauty of the Lord.

Transcript

Well, the Lord has been faithful to us again this year, and I understand not only our times of ministry in the morning and the evening, but the fellowship times in the afternoon have been very precious. It's good to be together with the saints, the encouragement we receive, the joy of worshiping together, and just finding out what's going on in other places. I was particularly blessed last night by Lance's message, and then again this morning by our brother Stephen, and I am charged with the last message after the messages have all been given.

But the Lord is faithful, and if he is with us tonight, as I believe he is, he still wants to share with us some new angles and then just some simple things before we leave. So we want to turn once again to Ephesians chapter 1, where we look at these verses and add to it the last verses of the chapter. Ephesians chapter 1, verses 9 and 10.

He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his kind intention which he purposed in him, with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times, that is the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. And then to the end of the chapter, where in verse 22 it says, And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all and all. And then I'd like us to go all the way to the end of the Bible, to Revelation chapter 22, verse 17.

The spirit and the bride say, Come. Let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come.

Let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. Let's just have another word of prayer. Our Father, we thank you for the riches of the times we've had together.

Indeed, it's a blessed thing for brethren to gather together in unity. Thank you for your presence, for your mercy, for your grace, for your quickening power. Thank you for your protection and the encouragement we've received.

Now we come again, once again, unto you dependent upon the Holy Spirit, asking that you would give us further room and an appetite to know more about our glorious Lord. Help us, Lord, in this hour. Quicken us, our tired bodies.

Refresh us. Let our hearts hear even what you're speaking to us. We thank you for all that you have done for us already and realize, as always, we're in the midst of a great move of God.

Oh, give us eyes and ears to see what you're doing in these days. We pray in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Here we see at the very end of the Bible a summing up. Here we see the church in such a position of fullness that she is called the bride and she is gathering, gathering along with the Holy Spirit saying, saying, come, let him who wills come, let him who is thirsty come. The church in fullness gathering in her beauty by the Holy Spirit.

And we believe that the days are coming that the church will be in such a place that her invitation will be listened to. You know, we all probably have tried battling and sharing and preaching the gospel to our friends. Some of you perhaps in some kind of an outreach meeting, you know, a lot of times we receive a lot of resistance, but in this tremendous last day and in this tremendous mega gathering that our God is doing to glorify his son.

It's true that there are those who are evil, those who prefer darkness rather than light. But the strange thing is we're finding all around the world and also here in America and even where I live up in New York, that there are many hungry people who are longing to see some light and some truth and some faith and some love. And you don't even have to fight with them.

You just need to tell them that Jesus is gathering them to himself as a shepherd gathers a straying sheep. And these people respond. Sometimes I go up to a time square church.

You know, many of you have heard of David Wilkerson and still he is alive. And even though elderly sometimes shares magnificent messages, but no matter who's sharing there, they usually have an appeal at the end where they gather people up. And there were, there's a thousand people meeting there three times on Sunday.

And when they just put out their hands and say, now who, who is broken, but wants to come to the only one who can heal you. Oh, people pile out of the balcony and out of the lower place and just come down and fall down on the floor in the front, they kneel, you know, and people come and pray with them in that evil city, New York city. But there's broken people who just are longing for somebody to say, come home, come on to me, all you that are weary and heavy laden.

I'll give you a rest. This is not just a local phenomenon. As we shared in our first message, there's a great mega gathering by the Lord of the harvest over these last 30 years, uh, from 1970 to the year 2000, I presented some statistics of amazing numbers of conversions across the world in places whose names were not even quite sure where they are on the map.

And the Lord is doing wondrous things, gathering people from the North, the South, the East, and the West, gathering them into his kingdom. Oh, he is gathering even today. And we, whether we're Christians or maybe you're just a guest here tonight, perhaps you feel by the spirit he's gathering you.

You know, at times Christians are rebel sheep out alone somewhere on a Hill. And our Lord is always calling you home, gathering you to himself. There was ever such a sense of love.

We get, it's when we see Jesus who has continued compassion now upon those sheep that are lost and straying around in the New York city, everywhere I go, I see people, people straying, you know, uh, actually Julie and I would just walk around in our neighborhood, which is quite a popular tourist place. And as people would maps upside down and people just lost, they have no idea they're going the wrong way. They don't know people are lost all the time.

Well, we, we get to direct people all over the place, but how wonderful if they all came to Jesus, that's the hope that they really need. So anyway, we looked at this wonderful harvest and it's surely a sign of the last days that so many people are being saved. This tremendous, if the statistics are right.

And if I even reduce it a little bit, just to be conservative, there's going to be 50 million more harvested this year, 50 million. And over half of them, not by denominations and big ministries and big evangelistic and big mission groups, but over half of them will be saved and brought into a little house church somewhere, an unregistered church, not even a church just well in Russia, they call it, uh, you know, I go to this one place, they've got the 300 of these things. They call the house of prayer because it's just a house where somebody lives and people come there and they pray and worship and preach the gospel.

And just millions of people being gathered by the Lord, even now at this point. But as we have heard, in fact, this morning was so wonderfully by our brother Steven. And as we've been reminded when Jesus, when it says that in the dispensation of fullness of times, God would gather all things or sum up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth.

We know that the Lord and his final purpose has something much more than to just gather sheep into a pen. As it were, he wants to gather us up into himself. There is this tremendous work going on right now.

And especially among Christians, there is this transition where having been gathered unto the Lord, we're being gathered into the Lord where we've been gathered to the Lord and have experienced all of his goodness and grace, and now being gathered into his life to the very place where we can say with sure testimony that Christ is our life. So you saw the masterful development of examples in the new testament this morning from our brother, as you shared with us, the Galatians who were holding onto a thing. What was the thing they had? Justification by faith, right? And because of that, somebody was coming along and saying, oh, you need to be circumcised for justification.

And they were getting confused, holding onto that doctrine, you see. And Paul was saying, but what you really need to see is that you've been clothed with Christ, who is your justification. You see, and once you see that it's not the doctrine of justification, but it's the, it's Christ who is your justification, makes a lot of

difference.

Did you catch that? That's being, that's when Christ becomes the sum of your justification. And then he went on to talk about the Corinthians who were called saints, but they seemed anything but saints. And he was trying to tell the Corinthians, now it's not a question of being sanctified through effort or something, but it's that God has made Christ sanctification to you.

It is Christ, our sanctification. And to the Colossians, it is Christ, our perfection. And to the Philippians, it is Christ who is our life.

And in second Corinthians, our ministry is the writing of Christ and the impartation of Christ into a person's life, not just the ministry of the word. So throughout our Christian life, whether it's the ministry that we're involved in, or whether it's these things that we've understood about our salvation, the Lord wants to make them real in himself so that we all say Christ is our life. So now that's a whole spiritual summing up the Lord's trying to do.

Now, you know, we've been talking about that and you've heard even about that freshly this morning. Then we also shared about the fact that the whole of scripture speaks of Christ, shows us Christ from the very old Testament through the new Testament. Well, now we want to go back to Ephesians because I feel we should pick up some pieces just so that we can all understand some of these great terms that are being used.

The summing up of all things in Christ, the fullness as is presented to us. When we read in Ephesians and we saw that in the fullness of times, God would sum up all things in Christ. As we said, the first night, the actual Greek there says literally head up all things in Christ.

So now if you were a Greek, as they were in the days when Paul was writing this, and you read that in Ephesians and then came to verses 22 and 23 of chapter one, you'd immediately get the association here. When it says Christ has been made head over all things to the church, it's that same word kephalos that was used back in chapter one, verse 10 heading up. So part of the heading up process is that Christ begins by being head over all things to the church.

Now we don't always take that seriously, but he seriously wants to be the Lord and master and head over everything that happens in the church. And so this is how the church is expressed in its fullness. He has head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

So he is heading up the church. Now, you know, the sister letter to Ephesians is Colossians. And if you look over in Colossians chapter one, we see a further thought regarding this whole matter of fullness and heading up in Colossians.

We see that this gathering up is not only involved with sinners being saved, being gathered up, not only involved with the church being gathered up under his headship, but this gathering up is larger. It involves the whole of creation. And Paul, by revelation has seen that Christ not only was the creator of the world, but now all things are being summed up in him.

Look there in Colossians chapter one, as it talks about his, his relation to creation as the creator. And then as the summation verse 15, he is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation for by him, all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible thrones and dominions or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through him and for him.

And he is before all things. And in him, all things hold together. He is also head of the body of the church.

He's the beginning, the first born from the dead so that he himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell and him and through him to reconcile all things to himself. And there we get the sense that what the Lord is doing is not only heading up sinners to himself and heading up the church as it's head, but now heading up creation, reconciling creation, bringing creation as a whole into fullness, taking this natural creation and through the process of his redemption and reconciliation, making that which is natural spiritual.

Now, this is a tremendous cosmic gathering. This is going way beyond us now, as we understand that he is the one who's basically bringing about a heading up of all creation. One day, even as we consider the sun, the center of our solar system, we'll all understand that Christ is the center of all creation.

He will be in charge of everything. He'll be the source of everything. And he'll be the cause of everything.

And he'll be the purpose of everything clearly seen. But Paul has already seen this revealed a cosmic summing up. Creation has found its stack pole in Christ.

And it all makes sense when you look at Christ in the center. But not only that, Colossians goes on to show that there's a micro cosmic gathering in our lives, in our individual lives. So in chapter three, we see in verse four.

Well, we should start in verse three, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ and God. When Christ, who is our life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. When Christ, who is our life, that's why we're seeking the things above.

We realize we're dead. Our life is now hid with Christ and God. We can't quite see what our life is yet.

It's something in process. But when Christ, who is our life is revealed, we will be revealed in glory. He's taking our lives and making his life the sum of our life in this wonderful way.

And then he touches again as he's sharing about these things. He talks about this new man. And by this new man, he's talking about the church as one new man.

And so as he's defining it there in chapter three, we see in verse 10 and have put on the new man who's being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the one who created him. That means that the new man, namely the church, is being created in the image of Christ. A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised.

He's still talking about the new man. So you see that's not an individual new man. It's a corporate new man.

Circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free man. But Christ is all and in all. One day Christ will fill the church with his glory.

Christ will be all and in all. All the brothers and sisters belong to Christ. And he wants all of the brothers and sisters to be full of Christ.

This is the process, the process unto fullness, the process unto the summing up that we notice here in the scriptures. We also see that this process in the church is vital to that final fullness of all creation. Again, we

know these verses, but let's look in Romans chapter 8. In Romans chapter 8, Paul talks about this tremendous yearning inside and the yearning also in creation for God's work to be done.

But first it has to start among us. And then the whole creation is set free. In verse 18, Paul says, I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. Oh, when God's children are transformed, our sons of glory, creation is waiting for that. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

And so now we see that there's yet a third expression to express this macro gathering that God is doing through Christ Jesus. There's this term fullness, especially in regard to the corporate. There's this term, the summing up, and there's also the term glory.

This is also a term that shows God's ultimate intention for all that he's doing in these days, bringing many sons to glory, glorifying these bringing all creation into glory. And so we see that the fullness is his measure and the summing up is his process and the glory is his essence. It's all a tremendous gathering by the finished work of Christ.

When we talk about fullness, and we mentioned the first night that Paul actually only uses the term fullness in Ephesians and Colossians in his most mature understanding of what God was doing. He sees that the end is fullness, that the maturity is fullness. And so he speaks of fullness.

Let's look at just a few scriptures there in Ephesians where Paul mentions the matter of fullness. Not only does he mention it there at the end of chapter one, where he says in verse 23, the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all the church is the fullness of him who fills the church. And then in chapter three, verse 19, and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

He's talking to the church gathered as they comprehend the dimensions of Christ. And then we notice fullness again in chapter four, verse 13, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature, which belongs to the fullness of Christ. The church grows up into the head and grows up into the fullness of Christ, the full stature of Christ, the full character of Christ.

This is what Paul sees is the end of things. We might notice in passing in chapter four, verse 10, that Paul also shows us the resource for this fullness. When he says he meaning Christ who descended is himself also he who ascended far above all the heavens so that he might fill all things Christ in heaven.

The anointed one at the right hand of the father has this infinite capacity to fill. He loves to fill. He expresses love by filling.

And so he's Paul says that he sat up in heaven, that he might fill all things. And then he immediately says, give you some examples, the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, they were filled by Christ. And they bring fullness to the church.

Every time there's somebody who's been filled by Christ and expresses that fullness of Christ, other people are filled. And so there's a sense of the church coming into fullness. So the term fullness does have to do with the maturity of Christ, this fullness of the stature of Christ, this is a goal.

But as I said, the first night, right from the very start, the church expresses fullness. Think of the church after Pentecost. We all remember Acts 242.

I don't think you need to turn there. It says that the new disciples, the 3000 who'd all been baptized and the 120 who'd been participating in Pentecost, they all gathered together. They gathered together.

They continued steadfastly to gather together. Nobody had to tell him you have to go to Sunday because it didn't have Sunday. They had Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

They continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching and in fellowship, breaking bread and prayers. Nobody said, no, I don't want to go. Why? Because it was at your house and they gathered in their homes and they gathered out on Solomon's porch.

They gathered and they gathered and they gathered wherever they gathered. Oh, there was such a sense of fullness. It was a very young church.

So what does fullness mean in terms of the young church? You know, we as assemblies, wherever you go to church, if we're lighter, if we're rightly aligned under our Lord and enjoying his living presence, there's a fullness there. That's really wonderful. I give you an example.

I think that there are in the early days in the book of Acts, there were four components, the fullness that you could see even in the young church. The first was they were full of gratitude. They were taking their food together with joy and singleness of heart and people were being saved just by seeing, wow, how thankful they are.

Paul mentions a number of times in his exhortations, give thanks to God. When we give thanks to God, it gives glory to God. There's a fullness.

There's people, when people's hearts are full of gratitude, there's a fullness in the church. When the church really worships with real thanksgiving, not that kind of hum drum, let's sing songs about thanksgiving and pretend we're thankful, though I can't think of a reason why. But that sense that I've newly been saved and my whole life is brand new.

You know, some of you know, some of you don't. I traveled to Russia, at least for the last several years, and I go out there where people are hearing the gospel for the first time and they have a new vocabulary. They're so excited about it.

Words like faith, truth, love. They almost sound Brazilian. We have a brother Lucio here.

I don't know where he is tonight. But brother Lucio, you know, he's from Brazil and he speaks occasionally back home in Flushing where I fellowship. And he loves to stretch out words.

He says, God so loved the world. I think loved is about four seconds because it's like, you know, he just loves this word. He just lays on this word.

The Russian just lay on this word. I've got forgive. That's old to you and I have faith, hope, love.

They were full of gratitude. I do believe I can almost sense when there's a fresh working of God in any assembly because there's a lot of thanksgiving, just a lot of thankfulness. Of course, there's more than that.

How can the church be the fullness of Christ? I mean, doesn't Christ have everything already? He doesn't have to ask the church for a Toyota. He has a Honda already where everybody's in one accord. Forget it.

Okay. But listen, isn't the Lord already full? How can we be the fullness of the Lord? Here's how we today, not even counting the fact when we're there at the end of the summing of all things with the spirit saying, calm, but even today, how can we be fullness? Here we go. Here's first gratitude.

Second of all, just being servants of the Lord Jesus, being his messenger, going out, telling the gospel, being the one who brings love and compassion and mercy, or those who are just servants of his. Oh, that brings fullness. There's nothing more wonderful than a master who's got servants running around, running around, doing whatever he wants.

And of course, it goes deeper than that. What is it that really makes it fullness? That first love, that love. Thirdly, that love that knows no price knows no cost.

Like the love a person has before they get married. What can I do for you, honey? Can I get you something? Can you, you know, can you, you know, and then you get married, you come to the cafeteria, the husband goes on one end, the wife goes to the other. No, no.

I see a lot of love even here at the cafeteria. Honey, can I get you something? All this kind of stuff. But you know what? It's, it's a glory to Christ and how the father loves it.

When his children just have first love, whatever you want, how can we fulfill your desire? Isn't that a great question? How can I fulfill your heart today, Lord Jesus? There there's, there's just fullness in that love fullness in that kind of earnest serving and, and there's fullness in gratitude. And of course, the fourth thing, which is kind of like the kick, the kickback, even in the early church, what was the church full of? The presence of Christ. People came into the church.

They just said, wow, what's going on here? Some people were afraid to join themselves with the brethren. There was such a presence of Christ there. It was all by grace, but it's so wonderful when that's when you see this kind of fullness there.

So, so Paul uses this word fullness in Ephesians and Colossians and we find it nowhere else. Oh, except where gospel of John, full of grace and truth. And of his fullness, we have all received John chapter one, verse 16, grace upon grace.

You see, John was written years after Paul and John, which I think is to my mind, one of the most Gentile gospels. It's just so gentle. It's universal.

You know what I mean? It's for anybody. They love that gospel anywhere. It's just so Gentile.

But anyway, John is trying to recover. John is trying to bring back the very things our brother. Stephen has been sharing in these days.

John was faced at the end of his life with a church that was losing the fullness and the reality, and they were going back to the things on the outside. And so John presented a gospel that said, look at the things

as signs and look through those things to the I am, because that's your fullness. John was trying to draw them back.

And so it was John who brings us again years later to this matter of fullness, full and obvious fullness. We have all received and grace upon grace. Now our brother shared a wonderful section in his message this morning on the grace of God.

It is wonderful. It is undeserved. It is freely given.

Paul says it's lavished upon us. And certainly in those early days, grace is just initiated sovereignly by God. He pours it out on us even unexpectedly.

We talked about this mega gathering from 1970 to even to this day. Let me just ask you, somebody said they'd like to know how many of you have been gathered in since 1970. You've come to the Lord since 1970.

Well, now there we are. You're part of that gathering process. You've been gathered in by his grace.

Praise God. Praise God. And by his grace, you've been blessed by his grace.

You're enjoying his life. 50 million people this year gathered into grace, gathered into the grace room for the big buffet in that grace room. There's a wonderful buffet.

There's forgiveness. There's love. There's peace with God.

If you have needs, you can pray and they'll be answered. You know what it's like in that grace room. Paul mentions in Romans, chapter five, this a little passage that caught my heart years ago, and I just love it for its simplicity.

In Romans, chapter five, it begins, therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we exalt in the hope of the glory of God. And not only this, we also exalt in tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance and perseverance, proven character and proven character hope.

And hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Now, you notice right there, it says in verse two, we, by faith, have been brought in through the door of faith into this grace in which we now stand. We stand in the grace of God.

I'm going to call that the grace room. All of these provisions freely given to us in Christ, even, and this is so important for many of the Russians, just a reason to live. As well as love and forgiveness and hope and deliverance and healing, it's all there in the grace room, all absolutely free.

The provisions of the Holy Spirit, all absolutely free. It's just a gift. It's a gift.

Go to the buffet. Go ahead. Go ahead.

What do you want? But of course, you know, the Lord wants to bring us from grace to glory. We can stand in that grace room. And sometimes I think some Christians have stood in that buffet an awfully long time, but God has utter confidence in his ability to get us to glory because he's got his trump card just waiting for

you unexpectedly.

There you and I are in the grace room. I think I need a little forgiveness today. I'm standing around in the grace room.

I think I need a little love. A couple of saints come over and give me a hug, hug, hug. Oh, this is the grace room is so wonderful.

But then one day I look through the window of hope and I see the glory room. Now I'm not there yet, but you see, I'm standing in the grace room, but I also rejoice in the glory of God. I look through the window by the word of God.

It's revealed to me the glory. And there's something about the glory room. It's no longer buffet.

It's a things of custom made, you know, it isn't the buffet. Now you've seen through the window, the chef and the new and deeper hunger starts to rise in your heart. You know, I go probably about once a year, I go up to Toronto.

Now, one thing they do in Toronto, that's hard to find a match is take you to the best places to eat food. And I asked my host one time, how come you always seem to know where the best restaurant is for the best food? Now, of course, you know, I'm some kind of food critic. What do I know? I eat anything, but anyway, I said, how do you always know where to bet? Because he takes us different places, different years.

You know what he told me? It's always Chinese food, by the way. He says, I follow the chef. Now he's learned a couple of the great chefs there in Toronto.

And they have great Chinese chefs in Toronto. And these guys get more money by the next restaurant. They go to the next restaurant.

He just follows the chef. Oh, it's so wonderful to be in the grace room with my 50 million brothers and sisters enjoying all these things for free. But boy, when I, when you look through the window into the glory room, and of course, it's Christ that you see has just something, a hunger comes inside you.

This is God's absolute confidence that you and I will be captured if we see Jesus revealed. And it's almost like the song takes on a second verse, you know, the, the salvation song, turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim. It's almost like there's a second verse and even the things of grace seems strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

We love the grace of God. It's always free and ready for us, but we've seen the glory room. Have you been gathered to the glory room? Have you looked through that window and seen this Christ? I wasn't saved until I was 20.

So I got started late for 10 years. I was so happy serving in the church, which we called the hospital for sinners, not the hotel for saints. I heard that from some guy and I liked the motto.

So I'd always say, well, that church is just a hospital for sinners, not a hotel for saints. And we'd preach the gospel and try to gather people in, you know, to the church, broken people, needy people. This is a hospital for sinners.

I was happy for 10 years in the church as a hospital for sinners until one day I saw the most beautiful Christ I'd ever seen. And it was a corporate Christ, the church. I didn't know that church was Christ.

I thought it was a hospital for sinners. I thought it was a gathering place. I didn't know until I looked through that window that day and saw the most beautiful Christ I'd ever seen.

It wasn't, I saw his head and then I saw this hospital body. No, I saw Christ from head to foot. Christ is the church.

I'd even heard that, but I had to see it. And when I saw it, I left the hospital because I found home. But that church is a glorious church without spot and wrinkle.

You know, back in that hospital for sinners thing, nobody has to really get serious about sanctification. Everybody can just have sloppy agape. You didn't have to deal with the flesh.

You know, you just held down the flesh you wanted to, and you use the flesh you wanted to. It's just a hospital for sinners. There's no big standard.

You just have to be saved. And the church I was in yet to be saved and baptized. That's it.

Now suddenly I see a church. It's my home. It's a glorious place without spot or wrinkle.

And I not only saw that that was my home, but that's when I learned how you get from the grace room to the glory room through the hallway of tribulation. And I have to tell you, I wouldn't have received this message of the cross, which by the way, this was back in those days, as I was telling you the first night I was listening to brother Steven. He'd always talk about the cross, how you find the cross in numbers or judges or Samuel or Ruth.

I don't know. I didn't know at that time. Now I have a clue.

The cross. I knew there was something, but listen, if you just want to be a hospital for sinners, just loosey goosey going nowhere, growing, dividing, fighting, then be it. But I'm betting you've already seen the glorious church.

Now two things happen. When you see the glorious Christ, you're caught. You are caught.

Don't say, catch me, Lord. You've been caught. You're caught by glory.

And the Lord begins to take you on a process to make you fit for the glory room. I mean, that's what it's all about. It continues all by grace, by grace, you've been saved and by grace, you continue on, but it's grace in the hallway of tribulation.

Have you been gathered to the glorious Christ? Have you seen Christ? Not just the Christ, the man who died on the cross. If you've seen the Christ of glory, whether you're at the beginning stage of your life, like Paul on the road to Damascus, when he saw the Christ of glory, it changed his life and captured him. Or whether you are a veteran Christian in a place of devastation in the hallway of tribulation, like the apostle John on the isle of Patmos, but he saw the glorious Christ and he was captured.

There is no way to go through the hallway of tribulation except in capture. Because the only way we go are able to go through the hallway of tribulation is through his resurrection life. We cannot battle it by our own

wits or guts.

We're going through something that's over our heads, but he's captured us and he leads us on. So notice that Paul can say, what a veteran this guy is. He says, we not only rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but there in Romans five, he says, we also rejoice in tribulations.

What a nutcase. Now, wait a minute. Paul's not saying he laughs when he has tribulations, but he knows where tribulation ends.

And he mentions that there's a track there. Tribulations lead to perseverance, then proven character, and then hope, and then hope pours the love of God into you by the Holy spirit. So Paul has experienced this enough to where he knows when he's going through the hallway of tribulation, the compensations of the love of Christ are great compensations indeed.

And plus the fact he's being fit for glory as he's going through these various process. Now I don't need to convince you, I think of the work of the cross, you know, heavenly arithmetic. If Christ is going to be the sum, something has to be subtracted.

If he is going to increase, someone's got to decrease. We know this arithmetic. There's no way around it.

And if we want our lives to be summed up and full of Christ, there is a subtraction process. He is the sum. We are the remainder.

And he begins to work on us and work on us and fit us for this glory. The grace is still there. The grace from the grace room is still there, but it's a deeper grace.

I like to call it, these are my own phrases, because it's hard to explain the grace. Sometimes in the early days, there's that initiative grace that comes from God as a surprise to you, even uncalled for, perhaps it's just given to you freely. But when we're going on in maturity in our lives, there's grace already there for us, but we have to respond to it and take it.

I was really helped one day when I was reading Professor Lightfoot's explanation of second Timothy chapter two. And there it says, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. But Dr. Lightfoot explained that what it really says there in the Greek, in the reflexive tense is strengthen yourself in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Now, do you see the distinction? Strengthening yourself in the grace that is in Christ Jesus implies two things. One, that the grace is right there, but you have to take it. In the early days as a basket case Christian, as somebody like you and I, who were completely on Christian welfare, God had to motivate you, do it for you, everything by grace.

He had to start it and complete it. Now you're in a place going through this hallway of tribulation and there's all the grace in the world we need there, but you've got to take it. Responsible grace is what I call it.

Why? It's because you have to respond and then he is able. It's his grace that's the ability, but you have to respond. It's responsible grace.

That's all that means. You still live by grace. It's his supply.

It's his ability. And there's two differences between that initiating grace right at the beginning and this responsible grace that's yours to take now. First, you have to take it.

And secondly, you'll find that you're taking not a thing, but a person, not peace, but the peace of Christ. Not a power, but Christ in his power. And not healing, but Christ the healer.

There's a new level to the provision. It's Christ himself. Notice the way Paul puts his own testimony in 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

As he's talking about the grace of God in his life as an apostle, as an unworthy apostle, in 1 Corinthians 15 verse 10, he says, but by the grace of God, I am what I am now, brothers and sisters may it be. We all come to this place. And what is this place? What is Paul saying? I've stopped arguing that I'm not worthy.

It's a done deal. I've stopped arguing with the Lord. I'm disqualified or I can't do that.

Or I don't have that gift or this is too much for me. I just stopped. Here's the deal.

By the grace of God, I am what I am. Even though I'm not worthy to be an apostle, he said, Paul, you're an apostle. Okay.

By the grace of God. Now notice what he says. His grace toward me did not prove vain, but I labored even more than all of them yet.

Not I, but the grace of God with me. And he makes grace almost a person. Now I've worked harder as an apostle by the grace of God, but you know what? It isn't me who's working as an apostle.

It's the grace that's with me. And who is that grace who's with him? You see, he's discovered that Christ is his apostle. He's discovered that he apostles by the grace and the life of Christ you see.

And that's why his ministry is so abundant. How we need to learn this fact. I would like to say, I thought Lance's message last night was tremendous.

And all of those eight imperatives are something we should write down back of our Bibles and look at as we stand fast in these last days. But I sometimes think that perhaps the source of the grace that enables us to stand and be faithful in those imperatives is this. Once having seen the glory of Christ to respect glory, do you respect glory? Do you value glory? It's unnatural to us.

You know, naturally we value ephemeral things, things that can be seen. But we know, of course, that Paul says he doesn't look at the things that are temporal, which can be seen. He looks at the unseen and eternal things.

And that's where he is betting. That's where he's investing. He values glory.

Do you value glory? As I look at some of the saints and some of the servants of God who are faithful, I've noticed a few things. One is this. When you find the saint who really is looking, has the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus, you see somebody who's in the race because they value glory.

You get my point? We all talk like we want Jesus to come back. But some people really have this hope that's a motivator in their lives, and they're pressing on because they know what's coming. They value, they value glory.

Those who value glory seek the things that are above where Christ is seated. Do you? Do you treasure the word of God? Do you seek the things above or are you just seeking more of the things on this earth? Valuing glory. You know, the Lord has to help us to come to this kind of valuation because we are so earth bound and we go through all kinds of hallways of tribulation, moments of tribulation to come to the place where we value glory.

Even after seeing the Christ of glory, the Lord of glory, do you think it's possible to have seen the Lord of glory, but to be falling back away into the things of this world again? I suppose it's possible, but the Lord helps us along the way. Many tribulations in our life make us value glory all the more. I'll share some with you.

Certainly for me, I remember the devastation of when my oldest son died in a car crash. You know, and when you raise your child up and you're a Christian and you're trying to do things right and then your son dies, it's a devastation. It's, you know, God, I did my part of the deal.

Why didn't you do your part of the deal? But you know what? That was one of the moments in my life through the devastation, through the coming back to square one, that I began to value the things above. One thing I knew, my son was saved and I'm looking forward to seeing him. And just that little bit of heavenly investment lifted the weight of my earthly cares.

The Lord will teach us to value glory because it's a very important key to having absolute devotion to the Lord as our brother Lance was exhorting us. Do you value the glory of the Lord Jesus? Well, if we, I feel confident that I am here tonight fellowshiping with people mostly who have already been suckered in to the hallway of tribulation, because you love the Lord. Now, once you see the glory, you want to seek for glory.

But the interesting thing about seeking for glory, when you read in the Bible, it doesn't work if you seek for your own glory. So even Jesus, when he was, you know, questioned by the leaders of the Jews, he said, no, I don't seek my own glory. If I did, I wouldn't be true, but it's my father who glorifies me and I try to glorify the father.

So seeking our own glory, I know we have that song, you know, oh, that will be glory for me. Well, when we get to heaven and we're with the Lord, it will be glory for us. But our focus isn't on our glory.

It's on his glory. If you really see Christ in glory, you want to glorify him. Your life is about him.

And Paul even says in a few places that I'm willing to suffer that you might come to glory. Isn't that wonderful? Because when we see the Christ of glory and when we've looked into that glory room, there is a new motivation in our lives. It's no longer just about ourselves anymore.

As long as we just stay like babes in the grace room and taking this and taking that, we're just selfish, selfish, selfish. But once we look into glory, you might be the most selfish person in the world, but there's something more important than yourself worth going after. And so our life begins to change.

Well, now you and I have been in this hallway of tribulation, I'm sure almost everybody here. So I just want to encourage you. If you've entered the hallway, then I just want to share with you four lessons that we learn as we're being fit for glory.

Lesson number one, as soon as you set your heart to go toward the glory, even through tribulation, you don't choose tribulation. You just start heading toward glory. Tribulation takes care of itself.

As soon as you set your heart that way, that's when you first come under the earnest attack of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The whole spirit of this age is against glory. It hates God's glory, even more the glory of Christ, even more the glory of the church.

And when you set your heart in this direction, the whole spirit of this age starts working against your absolute devotion to Christ. Now, here's the deal. If you set your face for the Lord and you just walk toward the Lord by the spirit of God, taking his grace, the world, the flesh, and the devil doesn't have much influence on you.

But if you look back, I don't know why we are Lot's wife, but we look back. I don't know why we do it. And right behind us, there's the dogs.

I just picked out three spirits of this age that are anti-Christ because they're anti-glory, and they come all over you and attack you. If you turn back from looking toward Christ, looking away unto Jesus, and running that way, you turn back. And here's the first thing, perhaps, it's Mammon's temptations.

If I were, well, if I were a nasty person, I could list people's names that I've seen running after Jesus. And then they turned back because Mammon said to them, you can do both, gain the world and gain the glory. You're exceptional.

You can do both. You can work on that job and make that money and everything. You can also serve God.

No, don't worry. It's Mammon's game. Just another year.

Just another year. I know they want you to serve. I know they want you to go somewhere and speak.

I know they want you to get yourself free. But no, no, no, no, just another year. It's all you need.

Just accumulate a little bit more. It's all you need. Oh, that Mammon's game begins to clutch over people's lives and they lose the race.

The second spirit of this age, which our brother mentioned, is the absolute obsession with psychology and self-centeredness. Self-centeredness, you know, a hundred years ago, people weren't so self-centered because you had to go to work. You didn't have time to get a cold.

Now somebody thinks they're coming down with something. They don't show up. People are into themselves.

How am I feeling? What is that for me? Who's me, me, mine. You know, Rick Warren wrote that book, the huge book, the purpose-driven life. And you know what? It struck a chord within the church.

And do you know why? I saw it firsthand. One of my sons who's not pursuing the Lord, saw the book, picked it up, read the whole thing. You know why? How many of you know the opening sentence in that book? Here it is.

It's not about you. It's about him. And this whole self-centered culture of Christians say, wow, what does that mean? What does that mean for me? And so they read it.

And so they are totally obsessed. And dear brothers and sisters, there's so many of us who are so into ourselves. It's a trap.

And we can't think of anything without thinking what it's going to do for us. You know, it wasn't too long ago when you just did something because it was the right thing to do. Sometimes you, even though your marriage wasn't going so good, you just stayed together because that's what you should do.

And I'm not such a person who believes that's not such a bad idea. We got all these people, but I'm not happy. I'm not happy.

I'm swimming in selfishness. I'm still not happy. How else can I fulfill myself? It's a deep trap.

It's a deep trap. And for Christians, they're trapped. They're trapped.

And the other thing about this generation, as Jesus even called it, an unbelieving, perverse generation, such unbelief. You know how it is. You work on your job, dear brother, sister, and you just mention the Lord Jesus and the ridicules liable to come your way.

I mean, it is such unbelief in this world, but Christians are just absolutely. And now Christians, of course, believe everything, right? Most of you are Christians. Do you believe everything? Amen.

But unbelief for Christians is manifest by fear. And Christians are so afraid that they can't serve God. They're afraid among everything else that they're afraid of.

They're afraid. Listen, they're afraid they're going to make a mistake. And that's their biggest mistake.

I don't know why we have such pride that we just can't stand to think we could make a mistake. I thought the Lord was telling me to go next door and talk to my neighbor, but it must've been a colossal mistake. And we're just bound up by fear.

It's a terrible thing. And it's all because we've stopped looking at the Lord and we turned around to see what the world has to say. Oh, the spirit of this age is not worth listening to.

If you're going through the hallway of tribulation, you stick in there with the Lord. You put the blinders on and go. Second thing I think we've all learned is this.

In the hallway of tribulation, subtraction is gain, right? You only learn that in the hall. Subtraction sounds like loss until you go through tribulation. Paul says, all those things that were gained to me, I now consider loss.

What is gain? What were those things that were gain? Gain are those things which affirm your self-life. I am an important person. And I'll tell you why, because I'm of the tribe of Benjamin.

I was circumcised on the seventh day. I'm a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I'm a Pharisee.

I've got a lot of gain. Those are the things that make me say, I am good. Me, me, me, me, me.

I am worth something. Then Jesus said, I want you to go, Paul. I want you to preach to the Gentiles.

He says, no, no, God, they don't know my credentials. He goes out there to somewhere in the Asia minor. He says, hey, I'm of the tribe of Benjamin.

They say, hey, I'm of the tribe of Mesopotamia. What's the tribe of Benjamin to a Gentile? And all those things that were gained that he could use for leverage to be a somebody, they were nothing. And in his loss of all things, he gained Christ.

So now when he goes out to those people in Asia minor, he takes Christ to them. Much more powerful ministry than ministering out of my credentials. It turns out, isn't it? Subtraction is gain.

And in your life and ours. So here's what happens. Everybody has a certain level.

And so what happens with young people, I see this all the time, is they get fired up. They're Christians. They start to serve the Lord.

But very quickly, what happens? They get maxed out. They get maxed out by the American dream. All their credit cards are maxed out.

All their time is maxed out. They just have no more time. Now, they used to go to Bible study three nights a week.

No time now. Because because now they're making good money. So, of course, you know, they go to the bowling club and then they got the movie club and then they got the this and that.

And then they got and then they have to spend 26 hours a week on the on the websites. And they're maxed out. Unfortunately, when you see a young person of 25 years old and they're already maxed out, you realize something.

God's going to call them to do something and they won't be able to do it because they're maxed out. The unfortunate thing about it is that's pretty much the adult malaise today, isn't it? And that's why the Lord comes along and he says, it's time for a little subtraction. I'm talking about a little simplicity here.

In order that you might have some time to serve me. So many Christians who say I'm going to get around to it one day. When we go through the hallway of tribulation and he starts subtracting stuff from us, we experience it every time he subtracts something from us.

Our loss becomes gain because we gain Christ. A third thing we find in the hallway of tribulation is many people, not everybody, many people go through a devastation. A devastation that arithmetically takes them to zero.

A devastation that undoes them. A devastation that takes them back to square one. And what we learn by devastation is there is no devastation.

Even devastation is gained to us. And why is that? Because most of the time is when there's been some devastation in our lives that we remember and repent and return and come back fresh. Oh, I praise God.

I know there are brothers or sisters who wander away for a while. Then something terrible happens to them. It doesn't have to be a tragedy.

It can be just a loss of their job. Everything goes wrong and all of their circumstances go wrong. They lose their house in the storm.

I don't know. Just so many things that can happen. And it brings them back to realize that all they really needed was Christ anyway.

And of course, they end up with whatever they need to get on with their lives. The Lord knows what we need in order to survive and overcome and live. But isn't it refreshing sometimes, even after a devastation, to realize that what you really need is the Lord anyway.

And we all say that. But sometimes it takes a zeroing out of our balance to get us to really appreciate Christ is our life. We're so dependent on our self-life.

And before the devastation, we thought just that kind of outward maintaining of things would be enough. But when the devastation comes, we realize how devoid we were of Christ. We return.

We repent. We find his grace again. Even devastation can be gained.

Well, the last thing I want to say tonight is the fourth lesson we learn in the hallway of tribulation. There's others, but you know, this is good enough. And the lesson is this.

It's when you're going through the tribulation, and when you have made the mistake, and when you have taken a detour, and when you have caused devastation, and when you have hurt others, and when you have lost your way, that's when he comes to you again. There's such mercy in our Lord. This spring, I was doing Genesis Bible study with the young people in New York, and I was looking at the stories, and I was looking at Joseph.

And of course, that's such a wonderful story, but I'd never really quite seen Christ and Joseph in this particular way. Joseph came to glory at 30 years old through the way of the cross, through the way of betrayal by his brothers, through the way of the prison, through the way of betrayal, and through this whole life that he lived just trusting in God. He was raised to the place of prominence at 30 years of age to be the right-hand man before Pharaoh.

He'd come to glory, but still that wasn't his purpose for him to come to glory. It was about his family coming to glory. And although Joseph realized this now that he was at that place of glory, what could he do but just serve Pharaoh? And so there he was serving when God made that wonderful arrangement and sent his brothers along to get grain during the famine in Egypt.

And when Joseph saw his brothers, he's just like Jesus when he sees us in the hallway of tribulation on the wrong track, all out of sorts, carnal and out of the spirit. He longed to hug his brothers, to reveal himself to his brothers, but he couldn't. Not because he wasn't ready, but because they weren't ready.

And so they went through these ordeals, and as Joseph put them wisely through these God-led ordeals there in the prison themselves, as they sat there three days, they began to say to themselves, perhaps this harsh treatment, this... At first the brothers were completely offended by the treatment. How could we be treated like this? We're honest men. We've never done anything wrong.

We just came to get grain. Why is this man saying we're a spy? Oh, this is so unfair. It's so unfair.

Three days later, they're saying, do you think this has a connection with what we did to Joseph? It took that pressure for their conscience to be awakened. And they said that, I think this is because of something we've done to our brother. On the way back home, as they opened the sack and they saw that their money

was in the sack, they said a further thing.

What is this that God has done? Now they knew they were going through the hallway of tribulation and God was leading the path, but they were trying to figure out what on earth is God doing to us? Why is he messing with us? We're just Jacob's kids. Innocent kids. Of course, they eventually had to go back.

They had to bring Benjamin with them. You know the story. The last beloved of the grieving Jacob, and they bring Benjamin back and they have a wonderful feast together with Joseph.

And it seems like the whole tribulations off. But as they start heading back, the servant of Joseph goes and finds the, the, the goblet in Benjamin's sack, which means Benjamin will be, go back, go back and be the slave of that master for the rest of his life. And the brothers would have to go home without the only one who kept Jacob alive.

And it was at that point that Judah did a noble thing. He took responsibility. He personally repented.

He openly said that God has done this to us because of what we had done to our brother. He pleaded with Joseph, not knowing who he was. Please keep me and send Benjamin back.

Judah repented. He had the guts, the grace. He saw the reality and he repented.

And when he repented, Joseph couldn't restrain himself. Another moment, he began to sob and cry and he revealed himself to his brother says, I'm Joseph. And Judah's whole life flashed in front of them.

The one we threw in the ditch, the one we were thinking of killing, the one we betrayed here, he is standing here, but they saw the glorified Joseph. They can hardly take it in, but all Joseph could do is just show them love. He showed them a sobbing heart.

He said, Oh, listen, brothers, listen, brothers, you thought all this evil you was doing was evil. God was using it to bring the whole family to glory. So now go back and tell dad that I'm alive here.

Take these gifts and show them. And of course, his brothers went back. He brought his brothers to glory.

He brought them to Goshen. He brought them to the land. He brought them to a place where God could cover them and bless them and enable them through a famine time.

And you know, I really think Jesus is like that. I know sometime I've gotten stuck because the hallway tribulation goes like this and you get stuck in a corner sometime and you quit or you lie down or you squabble or you get mad or you get frustrated or you take a detour or whatever you do. And right there next to you in disguise is Jesus, the glorious Jesus.

But he can't show himself to you yet. Until I repent and I say, I'm sorry, Lord. And then.

Surprised to find. The Lord crying for me. What a humbling thing.

Just when you think you're completely unworthy and should be disqualified and there's no way you can go on and your sins are unforgivable and your detour is irreconcilable. And that's when he says, go feed my sheep. And he comes and reveals himself to us right there in the hallway of tribulation.

When we're going through the difficult times, you know, something he knows you're going to fail and you're going to detour and you're going to quit and you're going to get mad and you're going to take

offense. He knows all of that thing. And he's just waiting for you, knowing that you've done that, knowing that you're human, just waiting for you to repent and return.

And he's right there. You'd have to climb back up to the grace hall. He's right there.

And when you see him again, you start running with Jesus again. He gets out in front of you and you start going. Sometimes it's as if nothing ever happened, but a lot has happened.

And he's brought you closer to himself. Isn't it amazing the mercy of Jesus? That he would meet us down there in that, as I call it, the bowels of the tribulation. We're in the intestines down there.

And give you the privilege of following him along until once again, he gets out of sight because you've slowed down or get off on the detour. How many times do you need to repent? How many times do you need to recall? How many times do you need to return? Is it once, twice, three times a year? How often is it? It depends what you're going through. But what eventually happens is you learn in the hallway of tribulation.

If there's something that's not right, it's probably your problem. And you just come before the Lord broken. Lord, I don't know what to do.

I tried to do my best and everything went wrong. So I'm obviously doing something wrong rather than saying it's somebody else. In that hallway, we start to own up.

Oh, what a glory. And through all that process, what he does is he pours out some more love, gives us some more grace. We lay hold of him as our life in another way and we run on.

Dear brothers and sisters, how many more conferences will we have anyway? Not just Richmond. How much longer before the Lord comes back? How quickly he's gathering the people in from the world. How wonderful to see that.

And isn't it that he wants to gather a group of people together in such a way that they can stand with the Holy Spirit and say, come as anybody thirsty, let him come. Oh, that the church could have that kind of fullness and beauty that you could see the beauty of the Lord. Because this is a bride who's been made ready and the bride is saying come and you can see and hear the words of the Lord gathering people to himself.

There's a great gathering going on. Millions will be gathered in this year. Are you part of the gathering process? Not only does he gather us to himself, but he gathers us from the grace room into the glory room.

We find ourselves down here somewhere together. That's why we can understand each other, right? We're all down here in the hallway somewhere. Have you seen the glory? If you've seen the glory, well, you could be just as selfish as I am, but something's going to press you forward anyway.

Have you seen the glory? Then the work that he's begun in you, he's going to complete. Have you seen the glory? Then you've got to learn to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it's a God who's at work in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Oh, there's only one way forward. It's to look at the glorious Lord and to value glory, value glory. Don't throw that glory away.

Even the rewards our brother talked about. You know, we talk about rewards so seldom, but all I know is those who lose reward because they haven't grabbed that responsible grace are going to regret it beyond imagining in that day. To value glory, the things that he promises to us who will be faithful.

These are the things that will keep us and help us and give us grace in these days. And in the end, the Lord is so gracious, so merciful. And in the end, when the top stones laid in, what are we all going to say? It's grace, grace that God is here after all.

Let's pray. So you have us on the journey from grace to glory. We have seen our Lord Jesus.

He has the glory of the only begotten of the father. He is the glorious son. And yet we see and find him full of grace and truth.

Oh, Lord, when we see our Lord, whether through the word, through some revelation, through some message given, our hearts reach out and we want to follow after him. And yet we know as we're going toward glory, we'll go through much tribulation. Oh, help us not to look at the tribulation, but to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Help us to realize that our loss is our gain. Our gain is our loss. Help us learn these lessons, Lord, as we're going through in this narrow way, as you're funneling us up and summing us up in Christ, as you're taking the various disparate aspects of our lives and bringing them into an integer.

Oh, Lord, make us one in Christ. We pray for the assemblies that are represented here. Precious brothers and sisters meeting together, just trying to maintain the outward.

Oh, forgive us, Lord. How you brought us into all kinds of tribulation. Just so that we can learn that sometimes our losses are gain.

And just to teach us how to have absolute devotion to you. No matter what. Oh, Lord, all of us probably has faced great disappointments, some devastation, some things in our lives.

Oh, Lord, I pray. Lord, don't allow our dear brothers and sisters to become hardened and bitter and angry and take offense, but rather break us, Lord. And then hug us with weeping as you restore us to yourself.

Lord, we know there's many wounded sheep. For various mysterious reasons and some not so mysterious. Oh, gather your sheep together, Lord.

How can sheep have pride when we wander so easily? But you're the glorious Lord. And that's the thing that holds us together anyway. It isn't that there's great brothers and sisters here.

It's that we see a glorious Lord and we see him in the church. Lord, and for all of us as we live out our assembly life. Oh, that we might experience the fullness of Christ with his presence, with service and gratitude and love.

The fullness of Christ's life in our assembly and in our ministry and in our fellowship together. Lord, we know these are wonderful goals, but they can only be attained to as we follow them. Oh, help us, Lord, to love the Christ of glory and lay hold of that grace that's provided for us.

Forgive us for all the times we say, give us grace to do something when the grace is already there. And give us the faith to say, I take the grace to be faithful to you. Oh, help us, Lord, in these last days.

You want a testimony on this earth of those who say, I love the Christ of glory. I've seen, I've tasted, and I want more. We want to run along with the apostle Paul toward that upward call in Christ Jesus.

Oh, help us, Lord, in Jesus name.

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