

Lookout mtn.conference 1973-01 Philippians

by Stan Ford

Paul's letter to the Philippians emphasizes the Christian life, with a focus on joy, gratitude, and the security of the believer in Christ.

Duration: 42:40

Scripture: Exodus 21:5-6, Psalm 4:8, Matthew 20:26-28, Philippians 1:1, Philippians 1:9-11

Topics: "Christian Living", "Faith And Service"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being connected to Christ and serving Him. He highlights the security and acceptance that believers have in Christ, as well as the power available to them through Him. The speaker also mentions the danger of pride and the need to trust in the Lord. The sermon concludes with a personal reflection on the impact of a missionary's dedication and a plea for more men to rise up in service to God. Overall, the sermon encourages believers to remain connected to Christ, trust in His provision, and actively serve Him.

Transcript

We might, in the coming days, consider together a little of the very wonderful letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. We will be thinking, of course, of some of the great doctrines of the Christian faith, but we will not be unmindful that this is the letter that includes the duties of the Christian faith. Most of us are aware that here is an epistle written to a church in a remarkable clipping.

Philippi had been named after the father of Alexander the Great, King Philip. It had been named to commemorate one of the greatest battles ever fought. It was King Philip who fortified it and made it the great stronghold that it was to become, lying as it did between, or on the route between, Western Europe and what then was termed Asia.

Some years later, to commemorate another battle when it was to decide who would rule the then-known world, Augustus made it a Roman colony, and there were sent down to Philippi a legion of Roman soldiers who continued in the fortification of the city and fought it somewhat under the rule of Rome. But there was a third battle, it seems to me, there in the city of Philippi, when a small and yet blessed band of Christian commandos made a spearhead upon the very shore of Europe. They came in to liberate those who, under the impudence of Satan, had known so much misery and sorrow.

The account of that story, as you know, is found in the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. We will be making, in the course of the coming days, no doubt, many a reference to the verses contained therein. It is a letter written by this man, this leader of this company of Christian commandos, as I would call them, of ten years later as he finds himself in a prison in Rome.

He allows his mind to go down the avenue of time, and he remembers those Christians in Elephant. He sends a letter to them. It is one of the epistles in which he never claims his apostleship.

Our younger friends will remember that Paul wrote, as far as we know, thirteen epistles. If you include the epistles of the Hebrews, as written by Paul, then he wrote fourteen. And, in many of these epistles, he makes the claim, right at the beginning, Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ.

But, when he writes for the church at Philippi, he never stands upon the dignity of his apostleship. For, where in Philippi there had been no argument concerning this, no strange doctrines would have written and had dared to say that he had never walked those streets of Jerusalem and those pebbled places of Galilee in company with the Christ of God, and therefore he could not be an apostle. They had accepted him.

Maybe it is because of this, as we read through this letter, we cannot help but feel it is not in one capacity as an apostle, but it is in many capacities as a servant of God the apostle is writing. We will be seeing this morning that he writes now as one who is a pastor, reflecting over that which has happened in that city of Philippi. Then we will see him not only as a pastor reflecting, but we will see him as a prisoner, and we will hear behind his mighty cry, My bones! My bones! My bones! We'll find him not now as a prisoner reflecting, but as a prisoner rejoicing.

We'll hear him say, I rejoice in my bones. Then we'll think of this mighty man of God, and we will see him not only as the one who is a prisoner rejoicing, and a preacher requesting, but we will see him as a pilgrim, and this pilgrim is reviewing. He's thinking of the pathway he has taken.

He's pondering the road that lies ahead. We see him now as a pilgrim, talking and seeking to encourage others to go with him on this pilgrim journey, and we'll think of him as a physician. As we think of this one, as he diagnoses the great complaint in the city of Philippi, we will hear him requiring of these hosts that they should be those that are not at loggerheads one with another.

Then, lastly, of course, we will think of him in the coming days as this one who is the faithful one, and we'll see him replying to the church for the gifts that they have sent, and the news and messages that he has received concerning him. You will understand that this epistle will last us for the remainder of the day that we are with you, of the days we are with you, and I pray that God in his mercy might take us step by step and lead us to that man who God, oh God's nature glorified. But, brethren and sisters, less in these coming days we meet Jesus Christ than our conferencing is going to be in days.

We'll go there, and we will never reach the pinnacle that God would have us, but if we meet him, then all will be well. Before him, then, we are going to give some consideration to Paul the pastor, and we're going to think of this one who is reflecting. You will understand by the mentioning of the other characteristics that mark this man that the Bible does not teach that he was the pastor there in Philippi.

He was one of many that were found in that particular church. But, as we think of him with a pastor's heart, you will notice a number of things concerning him, and so we're going to read together the first 11 verses,

and we'll ponder there a while, the first 11 verses of Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always, in every prayer of mine for you all, making requests with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. Be confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Even as it is neat for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that yourself may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, that he may approve things that are excellent, that he may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with all the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. The Lord will add his blessing to this first section, I'm sure, of this first chapter of the lovely epistle.

We're going to see together this morning how, when we read these words, there is first brought before us what are called Paul's gracious salutations. I'll repeat that. Paul's gracious salutations.

And then we're going a step further, and we're going to see that here is Paul's grateful heart, for gracious salutation will ever spring from a grateful heart. And then we're going a step further, and we're going to see something of Paul's genuine sympathy. It was not enough that he would sit there in prison, pondering the needs of the church at Philippi, and just mention to them that he understood their need, but with a great genuine sympathy.

He says, I have you in my heart, I have you in my heart, I long for you in the proud of Jesus Christ. Then we're going to see not only how there is his gracious salutation, there is not only his grateful heart, there is not only his genuine sympathy, but there is his godly concern. And, I will be saying day by day, as you will appreciate, that if these things will mark each one of us, then I dare suggest the good things that marked the church at Philippi will mark also the assemblies that you and I are connected with.

And, I am persuaded that the second reason I must be in here is that we now shall not only meet the Lord, but that when we go back to the assemblies from which we come, we may be those better able to help, to contribute, and to build up that which is for God in this day and generation. Firstly, then, what great doctrines and duties are put before us in Paul's opening salutation? Hearken to the words he dares to say. Paul and Timonius, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are in Philippi with the bishops and deacons.

The first thing that the apostle brings before those Christians in Philippi is the thing that you and I ever need to claim, as he speaks first of our security. He dares to remind them that here are Christians, saints, that are in Christ Jesus, in Christ Jesus. I think one of the loveliest truths that has brought to my own heart such a tremendous drawl is the realization not only that Christ is well the believer, but in a mysterious way that I can't fully understand, that I am in Christ.

The Bible speaks of the church as a body, and it is not necessary for me to remind you that there are three bodies that the Lord has. Now, please, gentlemen, wait a minute. There are three bodies the Lord has.

He had his material body, in which he moved among flesh and blood during the ministry. This morning, we saw something of his memorial body. He said, this is my body, spoken it is.

This is my blood, shed it is. And why would you not believe that that vine became the blood of Christ, and that bread became the physical body of Christ? We believe it was the memorial body of Christ, but nevertheless, at the death, there is another body of Christ. It is not only his material body in which he moved among men in this scene, it is not only his memorial body that we partook of this morning, but there is his mystical body, the church.

Not his physical body, his mystical body. There is nothing mythical about the body of Christ. It is as real as his material body, hallelujah.

It is as glorious as his memorial body. And here, the security of the believer that by faith in Jesus Christ, we are found in, in Christ. I wonder why it is that theologians try to make simple things difficult.

They do, you know. They do. I wonder if I could illustrate in a very ridiculous way.

I have a comb in my hand, I've turned it there in the pocket. I take that comb and I put it in that hymn book. And it's in the hymn book.

I mean, you saw it, I put it in there, there it is, look. It's in the hymn book. So I take that hymn book, on the piano, you know something, the comb's on the piano, isn't it? I take that hymn book, and I take it on the organ.

And the comb's on the organ, too. Wherever I put this hymn book, because in the hymn book, there is a comb, wherever I put that hymn book, that comb goes. And bless God, I'm in Christ.

And those Christians in Tel Aviv having to endure such terrible persecution, those Christians having to face tremendous problems, the apostle starts off with his annotation by reminding them that they are in Christ. I love those words in the eighth chapter of Romans, don't you? Those he also, they he also justifies, they he also glorifies. Not will glorify, but has done it.

And as far as you and I are concerned, because we are in Christ, we're Christians, we are, and we are accepted by the Father, because we're in Christ. This is our position in Christ. Later, he will talk about our condition down here.

Let's get our positions short. As far as a man or a woman is concerned, trust the Lord. We are in Christ, and Christ will never be rejected of the Father, and hallelujah, neither will we be rejected of the Father.

When men and women come to me and talk to me of what they call the four-way doctrine, then my heart is desperately asking. Remember the words of Jesus in the tenth chapter of John. Oh, I say, what a gift! I say, what a grip! No man shall What a grace! We'll be with him! Glory to his name! It's all settled in Jesus Christ.

If you have any difficulty about falling away, by the way, by the way, I often hear folks talk about backsliders that I don't believe have ever been born. So, let's get that matter right. Let's make sure you're in Christ, you're in Christ, and if you're in Christ, then hallelujah, you're in Christ.

When folks speak of falling away, brethren, I wonder if we could ponder for a moment that third chapter of 1 Corinthians. When speaking of that day of Christ of which the Apostle speaks, and isn't this a lovely

book? You can start here and go anywhere in the Bible. He speaks of the day of Christ, and you all forget the day of Christ is here on earth.

He's always in heaven. The day of the Lord on earth, and on the day of Christ, starts with the rapture of the church, it continues with the judgment seat of Christ, it tells us of the marriage supper of the Lamb, the presentation of the Father. Oh, what a day, the day of Christ! Starting with the rapture of the church, it takes us to the very judgment seat of Christ.

The third chapter of Corinthians tells us of a man. Man stands before God, and it's good, and it's evil, and it's all burned up. There's not one thing he has for God.

It's completely destroyed, and yet it says, I'll be at ease on this day. Oh, my heart! Oh, I'm glad that my salvation is at ease. Here is the Christian security.

And then, would you notice, in this palatation, he speaks not only of the Christian security, but then he speaks of the Christian servants. As he goes on to remind them that they are servants, the word, as you know, is one slave of Jesus Christ. I repeat what I said just now, he does not stand upon the dignity of his office and say, I am an apostle.

He says, we are meeting himself with Timothy. We are one servant, one slave of Jesus Christ. Never let us forget that doctrine leads to duty, and the realization that he was in Christ sends him forth to say, I am a conqueror.

Does it not take us back to the story of the Old Testament? Does it not show us the man who, loving his wife and loving his hand, although he could go free while being a slave, comes to his master and dares to say, I will not go free. I love my wife, I love my children, I will not go free. Does it not remind us of an occasion when they go to the elders of the city, and as to the king of the city, and there with an oar in hand, the man comes and hears his name.

Asked whenever after he was slave. The direct view of contradiction at times of free play, for he is one who himself has said, I will not go free. The apostle dares to say, I am in Christ in all the blessings of glory of mine.

Nevertheless, I take this position as a bond servant of Jesus Christ. Oh my master, I love brethren and sisters. Would I be right in saying this? Law circles round how much we love to say this, doesn't it? I don't find it easy to talk about loving things.

I talk about it because my heart wants me to talk about it, but I don't find it easy. Do you know I wasn't brought up with a silver spoon in the mouth? When I was converted and I first went along to an assembly, I had to sit behind the board, you know, old intelligence and trustful early life. But as I went and sat behind, and I would go along to the services, and I'd hear these brethren stand up and speaking about loving one another.

I tell you something, the shivers used to run up my spine. The people I mixed with never talked about men loving men, for there was no language in the folk I mixed with. It was one of the most difficult things I had to stand for the first six months of my Christian experience, listening to grown men talk about loving grown men.

I swore! I tell you, Christian, you know, I've got a heart that's really initially forgotten. But then, week by week, as I learned the pressure of what Christ has passed, the strength of the team, I found myself saying, Lord, thank you for loving me. I came to realize that it is from one's love for the Saviour that one's service can lose them.

And then the salutation not only speaks indeed of first our security and then our service, but then it speaks of our fear of service. For you will notice he writes to the saints that are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons. I like that as well, don't you? Isn't it simple? Why do we ever try and make things simple? Not many bishops, or one bishop over many churches, but many bishops in one church.

Well, he went to one church, he went to the bishops, and they're all, they're the bishops. See, I haven't come to understand the bishops, either. I might love them, but I would not, and I would not understand.

But I realize that here is one church with many elders, many bishops, and deacons. And this was his fear of labor in the city of Philippi, and he writes to the faith of the veil, and he says, my fear of service was with you, and your fear of service is where you live. Isn't it easy to be a Christian here? Isn't it grand to look at one another and say, well, God bless you? Isn't it grand? Of course, I don't know anything about you, do I? You know, I don't know how difficult you are in your own assembly.

He and you don't know how difficult I am, either. Would it not be true that sometimes it's easier to serve the Lord away from home than it is to serve in the house? And so, the apostle says to the saints that are at Philippi, here is your fear of service, and brethren, sisters, pray God that these coming days may be days when, to the ministry of the Word, we find ourselves in a vital link with the Savior, that we may go back to our Philippi to serve our Lord. When I was here last with John Phillips, a good brother who is here today and will remain nameless, but a good brother that was here said to John, well, John, I'm glad to be back.

I want to charge my batteries again. John looked at him and said, what do you mean? You want to be plugged into the maze? You didn't get that English, did you? But in a sense, plugged into the maze, not just a matter of filling our batteries. Day by day, linked with a price that will enable us to go back and serve the Savior.

But then you will notice, as we think of this gracious salutation, he speaks of our security, he speaks of our service, he speaks of our fear of service, and then he speaks, indeed, of the wonderful supply that ours in Christ Jesus for every battle. Why, they understood a little of what he meant. Some of them can remember when he walked into that city.

I wonder if Lydia was still there. I wonder if the Philippian jailer was still there. I wonder.

I don't know. The Bible doesn't tell me. I only know that there would have been some in Philippi, for it was only ten years after, there would have been some in Philippi that had been there when Paul had wended his way to a women's prayer meeting.

Not a Christian prayer meeting, a Jewish prayer meeting. He'd wended his way down to a prayer meeting by the side of the river. They had heard him tell of the Savior, to preach the gospel to them.

They'd listened to what he said, and they realized that he came with nothing, little more than the clothes upon his back, and maybe, I know not, maybe just a little package. But he moved into the town, touched in Christ for all his supply, and now he writes to them and says this glorious word. Grace be unto you, and peace from the source of all supply, from God, our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isn't it wonderful that for every battle we must fight, there is in him the grace and the peace that we need? Here, then, is his gracious salutation. And then he goes on, and having brought his gracious salutation to us, then he speaks of his grateful heart. And in verses three to six, he speaks so wonderfully of this.

He says, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making requests with joy that your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Here's his grateful heart. He says, I give thanks, I praise God, I joy, I rejoice.

Could I suggest to you, brethren, that maybe sisters as well, that maybe you and I need ever to have a grateful heart? There was a joy that came, the joy that came through his memory. I thank God for every memory of you. Now, the apostle was led of the spirit when he wrote these words, and so these words are true, absolutely true.

He says, I'm grateful, I'm thankful, well, I praise God for every memory of you. I wonder if we may look at our own assemblies at home now. As we look back through those miles, and we think of the saints gathering as we have gathered this morning to remember the Lord, could we say that we are thankful, we are grateful for every memory of you? I wonder, reversing it, would they say of us that they are grateful for every memory of us? This is how it should be, should it not, brethren? This is how it should work in the practice, the duty of the Christian living.

That we are those in the fellowship which God has called us to, whose labor and whose worship of God is such that we thank God for every remembrance of them. He says there's no tears here, I'm thankful. Sometimes we have to weep, don't we? I wonder if each one of us today, and in the coming days, would stretch our hearts before God that we are not thinking now of those at home, but that we here may so walk before the Lord, and allow the Spirit to have its way in our life, that others may be thankful for the memory of us.

So, this is where it starts, isn't it? Right here, with us. And then he says he's not only thankful for their memory, but he's thankful for their prayer, making requests with joy. I don't think any of us will ever be able, until that day dawns, to understand how much we owe to the prayers of other Christians.

I know I could never, never be able to rehearse to you what the prayers of Christians when first I was converted meant. I look back sometimes, and I marvel. I marvel not only at the pit on which Christ dug me, but I marvel at the sympathy, and the help, and the prayers of those early Christians.

I'll let you into a secret. If I'd have come as I came, when first I was converted into your assembly, I've got a feeling you'd have a prayer meeting hoping I'd soon leave. But, but I can see those dear brethren now, day by day, pray for us, continue to help us, and I owe to them, under the hand of God, the very foundations of any knowledge that I have of the Word of God.

So, and today, the Lord permits this coming September, it will be 30 years ago, since I was commended by my own assembly, the assembly until it fell asleep, to the work of the Lord. And over those 30 years, almost every day, preaching, I hardly ever hear anyone. That's why I love, I enjoy, coming to a conference like this, where I can say, as I did yesterday, to listen to such lovely ministry that our dear brother gave us, as to indeed our responsibility of seeing that Old Testament.

So, I owe so much to what I learnt, when first I came to know the Lord. But brethren, pray. May I ask you, brethren, sisters, do we pray one for another? Of course, the Apostle was a man of prayer with me.

I suspect I shared this with you before. If I didn't, forgive me, I shouldn't. But you know, whenever I think of the life of the Apostle, it began with prayer, didn't it? First time he's mentioned he's at a prayer meeting, or Stephen's praying.

That's a funny prayer meeting, but he's at a prayer meeting. There are the clothes of those that strong this man of God, a laser in his fist, and he hears his prayer, lay not his feet for their time. The next time he's mentioned in the Bible, he's at a prayer meeting.

I say, didn't he learn quick? He's not listening to someone pray now, he's praying himself. Well, I pray more. What wouldn't I have me to do? And he soon points out that prayer isn't just that.

So, this time he's mentioned he's at a prayer meeting, and Ananias is told to go and see him. And Ananias says, that's the prosecutor of the church, and God says, behold he prayeth. Now, that's interesting.

You young men who pray in the prayer meetings, that's interesting. Remember, our prayer is addressed to God. But never you forget, our prayer is also for the saints that are there.

For Ananias had his heart touched, and his heart born to Paul, because he heard Paul pray. When you pray, and don't forget the saints as well, will you? Don't forget. We've been, uh, we've been singing a lot, having fun doing it, I bet you're all crying, sir.

The lovely hymn of Alfred Mace. Well, Alfred Mace's son-in-law was Brother Camp, not Camp. Many years he served God in Australia.

He's just a little man, but a loving man. One day in a prayer meeting in Holbrook, in, uh, in Tasmania, a dear brother had risen to his feet and prayed a great blessing. You know, he'd gone down so deep, and he'd come up so dry, and he'd taken the saints on a world tour.

Now, if you've been on a world tour, show your photographs, but don't bore them at the prayer meeting. And, you know, away he went, and sure enough he took them. He started off in Australia, and then he went over to New Zealand, and up to Singapore, and away to China, and India, and Africa, and there.

He went right around the world, and for 20 minutes he prayed. When he sat down, Brother Camp rose to his feet, and in his rather squeaky voice he said, do you know more? Our brother has forgotten the cannibals in the Solomon Islands. He's left the cannibals in the Solomon Islands, and he's had a hangover.

You know, I think it's good, don't you? I think it's good to remember that God said, Ananias, don't you be worried about that man, you go and listen to him pray. Now, he's not praying to you, he's praying to me, but you listen to him. Remember, our prayers are for the saints as well.

And then would you notice he not only rejoiced in his memory, and rejoiced in their prayer, he rejoiced in their fellowship. He says, why for your birth, why for your fellowship in the gospel from the first until now? Isn't it wonderful to have fellowship in the gospel? I'm sure that those of you that teach the prayer of the Savior, you know what it means. When someone has fellowship with you in the gospel.

We had a dear old saint of our meeting, who used to say, you know, Brother, we get the preachers we deserve. He always said that, but we had someone that he hadn't enjoyed very much. He tried to encourage himself, and he said, we get the preachers that we deserve.

Now, what he meant was this. There's many a dear brother who's served on a rostrum like this, and looked into the face of God's host to minister the things of God. Most Christians are prepared, but they're frozen together.

You know, really, they sit there, and the brother doesn't know whether he's getting older or not. You know, isn't it lovely to see some sisters sometimes nod their heads when you're preaching? I'll let you in on a secret. He scoops the fire.

And there's many a young man who's served the preacher months, that God could have made a mighty man as a preacher of him. He started off without much knowledge. All the presence of truth, it's lovely to be able to look at a young man and say, uh, how you doing, that young man? Maybe he didn't know as far as you would have gone, but he doesn't know as much as you, does he? But what he does know he's trying to use in your life, are you? Oh no, isn't it wonderful to be able to say our fellowship in the gospel? And there's so many ways to have fellowship in the gospel.

So many ways. And then he goes further, and this grateful heart of his speaks of the joy of memory, and the joy of prayer, and the joy of fellowship. And then he speaks of a joy that's going to be greater than all.

He speaks of the joy of glory. He that has done a good work in you will perform it under the day of Jesus Christ. Oh, the wonder of it all.

He started, what, he's the Alpha and Omega, he's the first and the last, he's the beginning and the end. He's begun a good work, and he will perform it, and he'll perform it right until you stand at the judgment seat of Christ the day of Jesus Christ. I'm glad of that.

Sometimes the very force of this theme comes upon us, then one realizes all's well. As you know, last year I had the joy of being in Africa. The way and the heart of Angola, I was challenged in my own spirit, more than I've been challenged in 30 years of preaching, and I've met wonderful men and women.

I thank God for every Christian I've met. The last year in the heart of Angola, I found myself away in the mission station at Shillonga, and Betty Beattie was there. One lone girl working in an area bigger than England and Wales put together.

One girl, one white girl. And I looked at her, and I tell you, I dropped on my knees again and again during the course of the day, and I said, God, where are the men? Where are the men? She was a girl who had put together work, one after another, and one after another. Those that had labored in that area had left, and they'd left her alone, and left her alone for months and months and years on her own.

Yet he that began a good work will perform it. She continued in her labor for God, and this is what Paul's thinking of. He's at his prison.

He's thinking of the Christian. Come on, he said God started a good work in him. Oh, well, he'll perform it.

No wonder here the pastors aren't reflecting. But if we see here first his gracious salutation, and then we hear his, or see his, grateful heart, then of course we see his genuine sympathy. Oh, what a sympathy.

He says, I have you in my heart. This was not something that was just an outward expression of spiritual truth. This was something that sprang from his being.

Christ was in his heart, and he was in the heart of Christ. And so what would you expect? You'd expect an expression like this, wouldn't you? You'd expect him to say, I have you in my heart, but not only do I have you in my heart, but I long for you in the very heart of Jesus Christ, in the bowels of Oh, what a sympathy. He says, I have you in my heart.

Brethren, I think it's wonderful to have sympathy one with another like that, don't you? Isn't it easy to have sympathy with those that love us? Isn't it? Not so easy to rejoice with those that rejoice, is it? To weep with those that weep is so easy, but to rejoice with those that rejoice is so difficult. You know, when God is blessing that little church group on the opposite side of the road to you, and he's not blessing you, it's not easy at the prayer meeting you to say, thank you, Lord. It's thank you for blessing them over there, the apostles in prison.

And come on, what blessings he having in prison? Could you name any man that he led to the Lord while he was in prison? I'll name the time he led to the Lord in Philippi. And yet his sympathy is so real, he has them in his heart, and he has the heart of Christ as well, and he speaks of them, and he rejoices with them. Oh, that you and I might be able to do this, that we might be able to broaden our horizons and the things of God, realize that we are one in us, in this mystical body of the Lord.

Then would you notice, please, his godly concern. Verses 9 to 11. Oh, if we look at this, what tremendous truths are here.

And if I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, he prays for their light, that he may approve things that are excellent, that he may be sincere without offense till the day of Christ. He prays for their life, being filled with the fruits of righteousness. He prays for their fruits.

He prays, first of all, for their love, for their life. How important it is for us to do this, that you and I may know something of this, that there may be growth in our love, that your love may abound yet more and more. Oh, how he longs that there may be growth in their lives, that he may approve those things that are excellent.

By the way, this is interesting, isn't it? In ritual conference, I went through those first five verses in the first chapter of Acts, and during the week we just looked at them and saw something of the wonders of the Savior. The wonders of the Savior. And as we were taking the keys to begin both to do and to teach, I was emphasizing the holiness of the Savior.

Would you permit me to say a little of what I meant there? Because I think it's kind of here. You see, what he's saying is this, that here is the blessed Lord who moves amongst you. He prepared both to do and to teach.

And isn't it remarkable when the Father desires to speak to us of the holiness of his Father, he chooses three things. For there were three things that marked Christ. The first thing that marked Christ was surely this, was his mind.

People were amazed that the wisdom came from his hand. And then you will notice there was not only his mind, but there was his movement. He went about doing good.

And then there was his motive, that beyond it all he could say, I do the will of my Father. So God tells us about his mind, and his movement, and his motive. And listen, he chooses for his mind, who do you think? It doesn't come to a man like me.

He goes to an academic of academics, and he says to the school of partners, tell us something about the mind of Christ. And he says, you don't see it. And he wants to tell us about his movement.

So who does he go to? He goes to a man who all his life was known for his movement. He goes to a peeper, and he says, peeper, peeper, impetuous peeper, tell us about his movement. And he doesn't say he knew no sin, he says he did no sin.

Then he wants to tell us about his motive. And he doesn't go to a peeper, and he doesn't go to a paul. I'll tell you who he goes to.

He goes to a man who leads on Jesus' cause, and there's nothing that we have in the Bible. And he says, don't tell us about his motive. And he doesn't say he did no sin, he doesn't say he knew no sin, he says in him was no sin at all.

Have we got it here? Have we got it here? Hearken to what he says. Does he not say that you may approve those things which are excellent? He speaks of our mind. Does he not say you may be sincere and without offense? Does he not speak of our movement and our motive? And he dares to say that the fruit of righteousness which is, which is, for which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory of God.

So, brethren, sisters, here surely we see the pastor's heart. As he reflects, and he sends his gracious salutation to remind them of their security and their service, to remind them of their sphere and their source. Then his grateful, grateful heart, as he rejoices over them, and then he speaks of his genuine sympathy and his godly concern.

I pray that each one of us, as we ponder together the words of this epistle, that we may go back to our rooms and join our fellowship one with another, and later we may go back to our assemblies and our districts that we might also, having learned the truth of this epistle, go forth to know something in our life of the fruit of righteousness which is found in Christ Jesus unto the glory of God. To repay God and Father we dare finish where we started. We dare to say, O believe me, for the man who asked us, we ask that as he calls glory to thy name, we may go from this place to bring glory to thy name as well, for Jesus' name.

Amen. Thank you.

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