

VICTORY (PART 2)

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... John 15. We are still on line eight in your outline. We are still dealing with victory. I want you to notice this fourth verse of John 15 and shall read for you the first four verses.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (John 15:1-4)

Now it is these words I want you to keep in mind as we continue the study of victory through our identification, our union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John 14 verse 30 our lord Jesus declared:

"...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30)

This world governed by an authority other than the Lord Jesus Christ and our Father under the control, given to him by Adam. He controls the world, the world system. And he has used it against us. And so we have to recognize that when God in grace wanted to provide us salvation he had to include our three worst enemies. This morning we talked about the worst of the three and I always identify that one as me, as I. You can call it the flesh. You can call it the old man. You can call it self. I don't care what you call it as long as you don't try to escape the fact that it is you. Anything else you want to give it, any other term, doesn't affect anything. Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ."

Now what we saw, then, was that God's method of saving us from the tyranny of our traits and our habits and our attitudes and of temptation was by our union with the Lord Jesus Christ. When he went to the cross for us he was so totally and completely identified with us that we said, looking down on that scene from the throne, our God the Father saw two people on the cross: Christ and you. We were crucified with Christ. Now it remains for us to see that.

I shan't go further with that other than to say if you understand how to have victory over you, that is only one of the three enemies with which you have to deal. The second is in the world. In 1 John, the second chapter and the verses 16 and 17 we learn more about the world, not only that it is governed by this ancient foe, but something about the nature of it. We are told in verse 15:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Now if you ever see a picture of Satan with a pitchfork and it has more than three tines you know it is not scriptural or the way it should be. All the tines that he has on that fork that he has used to drive or entice the human family into his snares and into destruction are these three, all that is in the world. That is all he has to work with: the lust of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. These correspond to certain ancient idolatries. We find the first form of idolatry in the Scripture with that where Nimrod was said to be a mighty hunter, but actually the text is a mighty rebel against the Lord and he led the race in an effort to set up another system other than God. And the tower of Babel was envisioned as the

means by which they could tear God out of the heavens. And Nimrod, so we are told in some of their books—I don't know just where they get their authority—but it has been held generally and I have never tried to challenge it—that Nimrod took his father's wife, not his mother, but an incestuous relationship, he took his father's wife Semiramis and enthroned her as the goddess in this temple that had been erected and gave a new theology which was the theology of sexual indulgence as being the means by which they could fulfill religious obligation as well as satisfy their appetites.

Now it came down to us as the worship of Ashtoreth or Astarte and Juno and so on. All across the centuries there has been this form of idolatry which appeals to the flesh, which gives license and indulgence to the flesh and to the appetites and to sexual appetites. That is one of the forms that has been characterizing idolatry through the centuries.

And there was a second form of idolatry that is identified in the Scripture, one of the tragedies of Israel in the land after they had crossed the Jordan is said there in the book of Joshua that they feared the Lord and they served the gods of the land. Now you have to get a picture of that. Here they are. They have come in. They have displaced the inhabitants that were there before them. They have taken over their farms, taken over everything, their houses, all of it, all that was there. But the people were not killed the way they should have been, the way God had commanded them. And so some of them are still lingering around here and there. And can you see an Israelitish family and that have occupied a farm by one of the families that had been there and they are not doing so well? They didn't know all that much. They hadn't done a lot of farming in Egypt and they hadn't been taught much about farming in the 40 years in the wilderness and now they have taken it over and they are not getting along so well. And the fellow that once farmed this land comes up and walks on and says, "Oh, I see you are not running this as well as I did when I had it." And the Israelites says, "Well, I don't know. I am doing the best I can."

"No, you are not. You are not doing nearly as well as you should. You see that pile of stones over there in the fence corner?"

"Yeah, I have often wondered about that. They are awful ... they are dirty. What was that?"

"Well," he said, "That is the altar to Baal." "Well, what is Baal?"

"Well, Baal is the owner of this place. That is the evil spirit that controls this place and you can't have a crop here unless you get his cooperation. And the way you get his cooperation is to bring a sheep and you kill it and put the blood there and make a sacrifice to Baal and then you will get a good crop."

Well, obviously that Israelite isn't going to do that. He wouldn't think of it. He tells his wife about the conversation that night and she said, "You know, if we had a good crop I could get some of those things I have been looking at in the catalog and we haven't had the money to get and I think maybe we might just give it a little thought. Let's not put it away too fast."

And so it just happens that a poor little lamb that jumps up on the top of those rocks and runs into a knife. I mean, it was all accidental, you know. I mean, it wasn't intentional, just runs right into it and it just cuts its throat. So what can he do? He just leaves it there and lets the blood run and sure enough he gets a good crop. And so the word spreads and so here you have got a people that God has delivered and they have found a little compromise here, a little compromise there. And the result they feared the Lord and they served the gods of the land. They brought judgment on them because of that.

Now that is the world. That is the lust of the eye, things that they could see and get and it corresponds to the worship of Baal.

Well, subsequently there was a third type of worship idolatry that crept into Israel and angered God. It was called the worship of Moloch. Now Moloch is composed of three, I call them, Arabic radicals R and M L K Moloch and it is a word that is current in Arabic. For instance, when we first arrived in Egypt in 1945 Egypt

had a king and we were there in there in the day of the opening of parliament when the king rode by right in front of the American University guest house where we were staying and we stood inside the fence and climbed up on the fence and we could see the beautiful horses, Arabian horses coming by and the gold coach. And as the king approached the people took up a great cry {?}. It is the same radicals as you had in Moloch. It means king.

Now the best we can see, Moloch was in the form of a statue, quite large, oh maybe 20 feet high or even higher. And it was carved out of solid rock and it had tunnels that had been drilled up from the back and they would put bellows on the back and the way the figure sat this regal figure, his arms out over his thighs and his hands clasped made a kind of a fire basin and they would put charcoal in that and set it aflame and then the priests would get behind and work the bellows until they had a red bed of coals. And the person that wanted to make an offering to Moloch, a husband and wife, baby maybe eight days old, just a little one and stand there and agree together and the priest would ask what they wanted. And what they wanted was to make a sacrifice to Moloch.

Now why? Well, you see, the worship of Moloch was associated with position, with power, with influence over people or, if you please, the pride of life. So her is a mother. Her is a father with their child, usually a first born. And the father would take the child away. A basketball player would try to establish a trajectory and then would throw the little one up in the air with the purpose of landing right in that bed of coals and be consumed.

You say, "That is horrible."

Sure it is horrible, but it is also horrible that parents in our day and our generation are sacrificing their children to their ambitions. We have a great deal of the worship of Moloch today.

Now that is all there is in the world: the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life, the worship of Astarte, the worship of Baal and the worship of Moloch. Now that is all he has. He doesn't have any more. That is it. That is all that is in the world.

Now you and I once were ... walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince and the power of the air, that same spirit that now works in the children of disobedience among whom we all had our manner of life in times past fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind and were by nature the children of wrath even as others. But God for his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins has provided us victory so that now that we have been washed in the blood of his dear Son, we have been born into his family, we can go back into that world where once we were slaves and we can be there safely and free.

Why? How could God work so marvelously that he could trust us who once walked according to the course of this world to go back into that world without fear that we were going to be forced back into slavery? Well, that is marvelous to realize that when God purposed our salvation he included everything that was necessary for us to be everything that he wanted us to be. And he called it so great salvation and everything the Father purposed the Son provided. It has been made available and everything that the Son provided God the Holy Spirit is here now to make real and effective and operative in my life and in yours. And, therefore, we have the text of the conference:

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation." (Hebrews 2:3)

If God knew we needed it and Christ provided it and the Holy Spirit wants to make it operative in us, how in the world are we ever going to escape the consequences of doing nothing about it? Not even caring enough to find out about it, much less to appropriate it and act on it and live in it.

Well, that is where we are. Now how did God design that we were going to have victory over the world? Well, I will tell you. We found out that we have victory over ourselves by our union with Christ in his death.

We are crucified with him. Knowing this that we are crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, annulled, that henceforth we should not be the bond slaves of sin.

So it is as we see ourselves on the cross crucified with Christ that we have victory in the moment of temptation. But that is not the only place he went. We saw in John 15:4 he said, "Abide in me." Now that, he is not telling the branch to abide in the vine because if it has been put there by God the husbandman, it is going to stand in the vine. But he is talking about something that we consciously must do, something that is a responsibility to do, something to abide, to live to dwell.

Now where do we find the Lord Jesus initially and find we were in him and with him? Well, we were crucified with him. But did he stay on the cross? No. They took him down from the cross and they laid him in a tomb. Well, how many people were on the cross? Well, you were... the proper answer would be: Christ and me. There were two of us there. He was dying there for me and I was dying there with him. That is historical. The day Christ died, you died. The day Christ died I died. I don't have to think dead and play dead and try to be dead. This is a history. When he died for me I died with him.

Now how many people were in the tomb? Two. Who were they? Christ and me. We were buried together with him as baptism is a picture. We were immersed and submerged in him in the tomb. Why? Because as we understand that we are buried with him it immunizes us to the attraction and the appeal of the world.

Let me illustrate it. Here is a man that has been very successful in business. And he went back to the time of the first model A Ford. And every since then he has been buying a new car every year. And the salesman knows he just writes it down. He has got one sold. But something happened. This last year he never made it through March. When I lived here in Minnesota my elderly relatives used to say if you make it through March you are going to make it for another year in Minnesota. Well, this fellow never made it through March. And September comes and the new models come out and so the salesman looks at his book and it says, "Boy, old Harry is not here. I can't give up that easy." So he goes out to the cemetery and stands over the grave and he starts to talk to Harry about how attractive the new models are. He tells him how high the tail fins are and how much power it has got and what mileage it gets. Well, I will assure you where Harry is, wherever it is, he is not interested in the new models. There is something about being buried that puts a distance between you and the advertising. You are just not that excited about it anymore. And so God's way of dealing with us and the world was that we were to abide in Christ, buried with him.

Now if that is the case, then there is a gulf fixed between us and the world we are in. We can go back into it and not be susceptible to it. So we have got to understand then, that God had a method. But it is a method that demands obedience. He said, "Abide in me." That means live. That means reside. That means make your home.

Abide in me, crucified with me to have victory over yourself. But abide in me, buried with me to have victory over the world, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. And once you see this and once you understand it and once this becomes part of the affirmation in your daily prayer, "Father, for this day I see myself by faith in union with Christ on the cross, crucified with him and buried with him," that I might walk back into this world governed by your ancient foe and not be susceptible to its enticements."

It is astonishing the way God honors his Word when we are simple enough and child like enough to believe it and obey it. And he said, "Abide in me."

Well, we have dealt with two of the enemies, the flesh and the world, but we have still got a third one to worry about a little bit. What are we going to do about the third one? Who is that? Well, that is the devil, the flesh, the world and the devil. Now how are we going to overcome this ancient foe? I think you had better turn to Revelation chapter 12 and verse 11 and let the Word speak to your heart. And if you don't have it underlined in red or something else to see when you open the book, you better make, take care of that and get that so that you really are familiar with it and know it is there. And what does it say?

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” (Revelation 12:11)

You see, the enemy didn't realize. Here when the Lord Jesus went to the cross he became vulnerable. He reached out to you and made in the eyes of his Father to be what you are. He identified himself with you. And when he went to the cross he was there in such a way that the Father had to see him as you and pour the wrath that he had against you and me upon his Son. He was there as me to vindicate his law and his holiness and his righteousness and his justice, but at the same token because he had identified with me and with you, it was, thus, that the enemy, this one that he cast out of heaven down to earth now sees his opportunity because God the eternal Son has identified with sinful men and he is there made to be sin for us, he who knew no sin. And so it is that our Lord is caught in crossfire between two worlds.

On the cross, therefore, the Father brought to him the cup of his wrath against sin and our Lord Jesus drank it to its last bitter drop. But also because he was there as you, as me, and was God, thus so identified, we find in the psalms that all of hell gathered around the cross and those three hours of darkness, I believe, are described in the psalms when it tells us that his heart was melted like wax. He was wounded. He was bruised. He didn't even resemble a man. Why? Why every arrow in the quiver of hell was loosed at the Son of God. Every spear was thrown at him. They buffeted him. Everything that could be done by the god of this world against the God of heaven and earth who is identified with us as sinners and, thus, become vulnerable.

And, finally, when all the minions of hell didn't have any more arrows to shoot or spears to throw and they couldn't do anything more, the Lord Jesus looked and said on the one hand the justice of God, the righteousness of God is vindicated and the power hell has been loosed. Life has said to death, “Do your worst.” Light has said to darkness, “This is your moment.” Truth has said to the lie, “Have at it.” And then our Lord Jesus said, “It is finished.” And he died, gave up the ghost and his heart broke and blood rushed out from his heart and he died and was taken from the cross and was buried and the third day that God life that could not die returned again. And when he came forth from the grave he led captivity captive. And we follow in the train of his triumph. And what is our testimony? That we were the ones for whom the Lord Jesus died. We once were the slaves of hell. We once were locked into the control of the God of this world. We once have chosen him to govern us. But we renounced him. We repudiated him. We have committed all we are and have to Jesus Christ and Christ died for us and Christ conquered that ancient foe and so we overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.

That is marvelous and you need to understand that and that is part of so great salvation. You have to recognize it and realize this. But that is not all. You see, the Lord Jesus Christ not only wanted to give us personal victory over our defeated foe, but he also had another responsibility which was part of so great salvation. So you have got to turn now to Ephesians the first chapter and verse 20, because here we are going to find that the Spirit of God has something very important to say to us.

Paul writing to this church at Ephesus tells them that he is praying for them that the eyes of their understanding may be opened, that they may know, as one of three things, the greatness of his power to us ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

So what is he saying? Now I have a King James Bible and I have in the second chapter, the first two words are and you. Anybody else have one? I am often alone. Let's see if you have got one. Have you got one? Well, this is what I want you to do. I want you to put a little circle around and you and then I want you to run a line up on the side there up to verse 20 and I want you to run that line over so that it reads like this, that you might know the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him and you from the dead and set him and you at his own right hand in the heavens far above all principality and power and might, because that is exactly what it ... I used to wonder why in the world did the King James translators

start the second chapter with and you, because and is a conjunction and the function of a conjunction is to conjunct and I couldn't see by looking at it what were conjoined, but I found out that if you put that and you up there you get the meaning of it which he wrought in Christ when he raised him and you from the dead.

And you are going to look at me—you ought to—and say, “Aren't you playing fast and loose with the Scripture to shift words around like that and get them all mixed up and put arrows here and there?”

Well, I might and I might be intimidated by your accusation if you had the temerity to make it, but I am not counting on that, because I think you figure that I must have had a way out of this before I walked into it. I want you to go down to verse five, will you, of the second chapter. You see the way we read it is this that we might know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us ward who believe according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him and you from the dead and set him and you at his own right hand in the heavenlies.

Now I want you to go down to the second chapter where we read:

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: (Ephesians 2:4-6)

Now you want to fight my and you? I don't think so. I got you right in the corner here. That is what he is telling you, that there were two people on the cross, Christ and you, that he might give you, provide you victory over temptation. And there were two people in the tomb, Christ and you that might have victory over the world. And there are two people that were quickened and raised and seated. Why? That you might have victory over principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age.

Now why? What is the purpose? You see, he wanted to deliver you from the power of the enemy. But he led captivity captive and he is now at the right hand of the Father with all power in heaven and earth in his hands. And he wants his victory enforced in the world. And the very people that very human beings that sold themselves under Satan are the ones that have been redeemed from the power of Satan and now they are the ones that have entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing the victory of Christ over Satan. Now isn't that marvelous the way the Lord has designed this and devised this and set it forth?

And that is part of salvation. Because what did he say? He said when he was there that the Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach liberty to the captives. And how is he going to do that? There is only one way and that is to lead captivity captive and come back and take that authority and take that power. Well, now who is going to enforce it for him?

Obviously he could have used angels. He has got enough of them. As near as we can figure out, he has got about 200 million. Now that ought to be able to find enough to do it, but, you see, they, the ones that came under Satan are still under Satan and the ones that didn't revolt with Satan are serving God and so God in his wisdom and God in his love has turned the enforcement of his victory over to those that once were the slaves of Satan over time.

And so the Lord Jesus said in John 15:4, “You abide in me, crucified with me to have victory over yourself, bearing with me to have victory over the world and quickened and raised and seated with me to have victory over principalities and powers.”

Now it is interesting in the third verse of the third chapter he said:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3)

But that is where the spiritual blessings are. And that is where we are to abide. That is where we are to live. That is our natural habitat in Christ. Seated in Christ in the heavenlies. And he said, “You abide in me. Now you live in me. You dwell in me. You reside in me. You make your home there.” But it is much easier for us to make our home here and think those are just nice pious words that really don’t have great application to our daily lives. But I assure you, dear friend, that this is God’s way of delivering the captives. He has put you in charge, in trust with enforcing his victory.

Now how does it work? Well, there have been many times when I have been witnessing to someone and they have said something like this. “Well, I hear what you are saying and I guess I could spell all the words you are using, but they don’t make any sense to me. I don’t comprehend anything that you are saying. It is just words. I don’t really see it.”

When I heard that the first time, I used to think, boy, these guys are stubborn, willful. Man alive, they just won’t listen. And then I realized they were telling me the truth. You see, the Scripture says if our gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost. The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them. And so without closing my eyes, without moving my lips, without changing expression in my heart I prayed. Father, this man is telling the truth. This woman is saying exactly the truth. He can’t see. Doesn’t understand. The god of this world has blinded their minds. But just now on the authority that is ours in the body of Christ to enforce the victory of the Lord Jesus, I take authority over the enemy and ask you to see to it that that hood of death is lifted and this mind is opened to perceive the truth and understand the truth. And I do it in Jesus’ name.

Now you notice I didn’t have any address to the enemy. I addressed the Father and I prayed to the Father. I never have been encouraged much to pray to the enemy. I just don’t get involved with that if I can avoid it. I know there are certain circumstances, but I tell you, those of you that have been in Africa where hell is a reality are a little bit careful. We have just seen too much to go pushing around a lot. But when I have prayed I have said, “Father, I am claiming the victory of Christ for the release of this mind from this blinding effort of a defeated foe and ask you to see to it that this mind is opened so that they can understand the gospel. And that doesn’t mean I have got control over them to submit to Christ. God didn’t take it and he won’t give it to us, but at least they can hear it. And I have had that same person say, “Well, I don’t know what has happened, but it just seems so clear now. Yeah, I understand what you are talking about,” in just a few moments. God has answered prayer. Why? Because he has turned over to his body the responsibility to enforce his victory.

Let me illustrate it. Years ago I was down in Asheville, North Carolina in the Alliance church. They were having a meeting and I had met some friends of... when I was with Sudan Interior Mission in Augusta, Georgia. And one of these people from Augusta lived there, had the school year task of being the Bible teacher in the school, public schools in Hickory, North Carolina. And I knew that. She had been one of two people that had agreed to pray for me as I began the deputation ministry down there in the south and they had prayed everyday, she and this other lady who was at Wheaton College as a dorm mother. Every single day they prayed for me.

Now she is at the church in Asheville. The service is over. And she said, “Brother Paris, can I talk to you?” We went into the pastor’s study. He said, “Now, you know my sister.” And I did, a very prominent family, an old family in Augusta and her sister was an alcoholic. And she said, “Sister has been just such a problem. Probably three or four times a month she will get up in the middle of the night, go out of the house in her nightclothes and wander on the streets of Augusta. The police have been alerted. When they find her, they bring her home. They don’t take her. She was intoxicated. But it is just such a burden to us and such a cross. My brother—and I knew her brother was a businessman of great success in Richmond, Virginia—my brother is continually writing me and calling me and telling me I have got to give up my Bible teaching ministry and go back to Augusta and take care of our sister. But the school board has passed a resolution that I am the last public school Bible teacher they will ever have in Hickory. And therefore if I leave, there won’t be anybody that could take my place. They won’t have anybody else. But as long as I am here, I can continue to teach. And I just don’t believe that God wants this school, these children to be without someone to give them the Word.”

Well, I explained to her what we were going to do. I read this portion of Scripture to her. Now I said, “Do you understand?”

“Oh, yes, I do understand.”

“Will you join me in prayer? Will you agree together in this that as touching it that the only purpose for this is that the Lord Jesus Christ should be glorified, that we should enforce his victory in this so that he can get the glory that is his due out of Hickory and out of your life and from your sister as well?”

Yes. And so together we there we prayed and we asked the Father in the name of our wonderful Lord Jesus to just return back every effort of a defeated foe, every spirit of darkness or deception or the enemy himself and release this so that Christ could get the glory that he deserves out of this ministry. We prayed.

I never heard anything. I left on the next day. That was the last day of the meeting and went on my way. The next summer I was down in Hendersonville, North Carolina in a meeting there and after the service was over this lady came up to speak to me. And she said, “You know, brother Paris, I don’t think I ever told you what happened after that day we prayed in the pastor’s study.”

I said, “No, you have never told me a word. What happened.”

She said, “Before eight o'clock the next day my brother reached me on the phone and he said, ‘Sister, I have had a very strange night. I have felt the Lord talking to my heart. And he has made it clear that you are to stay in Hickory and teach the children. I am starting after breakfast, go down to Augusta to bring our sister up here to Richmond and I have already called the head of the local institution that takes care of alcoholics and our sister can go in there and receive the best treatment there is in the country. And I just wanted you to know.’”

Wasn’t that marvelous? Wasn’t that wonderful? What if I neglected to understand that truth? Do you see the difference in what it made? How are you going to escape if you neglect so great salvation?

All the good you could have done will be on your head and all the bad that you did will be on your head. And so it is so important for us to understand that what he has provided for us and to appropriate it and to experience it and to use it wisely and carefully.

So back again to see it. Christ said, “Abide in me. Abide in me, crucified with me to have victory over yourselves and buried with me to have victory over the world and quickened and raised and seated in the heavenlies so that you can have victory over principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age.”

A couple of weeks ago a pastor, a very fine pastor know friends here at Bethany called me. He said, “I am being harassed by the enemy. I have had a terrible time. I have just felt so buffeted. What can I do?”

I said, “When... what do you do every morning before you talk to anybody? Do you make the stations of the cross?”

He said, “What are you? Have you gone Catholic?” I said, “Pretty much. I guess I have.”

He said, “What do you mean?”

I said, “Do you see yourself crucified with Christ and buried with him and {?} with him and raised with him and seated with him? And do you?”

He said, “No, I just haven’t done that.”

And I said, “You better. And then you go over to Romans... Ephesians six and you put on the helmet of salvation and your loins girt about with truth and the breastplate of righteousness and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. You take the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit.”

You would never think of facing your friends if you weren't properly dressed and groomed. What do you think God gave us armor for? Just to hang on our wall? No, he gave it to us to us by faith. What do you think the Lord Jesus said? Abide in me. Was it just because he wanted to say something to fill up the verse? No, because it is a secret to your victory and your triumph and your blessing. And if we neglect so great salvation, we are going to have to pay the price. And I said to the pastor, “Now I think you just better make a practice.” I said, “No, I am not taking up Catholic stations of the cross. What I have done is understood my identification with Christ.”

He said, “I know that. I was trying to be facetious.”

I said, “Don't ever be facetious about this. This was salvation. Salvation, deliverance from our three greatest foes, from ourself, the world and the devil.”

Well, we need to see them in relationship. And we need to be prepared to practice them every day. You know, they called company of people 250 year ago Methodists and I don't believe any of us get very far with God until we become Methodists in the sense that we have spiritual discipline that we accept upon ourselves every day in order that we might have the benefit of the victory of Christ in his great cross work for us. Abide in me. And he said, “And I will abide in you.”

I want you to look up and see the lights above you. Just take a quick look up somewhere. He said, “If you abide in me, I will abide in you.” Now those light bulbs there have five grooves on the base, five threads and I have given them names. You expect me to, wouldn't you? The first one is crucified with Christ. And the second one is buried with Christ. And the third one is quickened with Christ. And the fourth one or the next one, I guess, I lost count, is raised with Christ. And the final one is seated in the heavenlies. Now he said, “If you will abide in me, crucified with me, buried with me, quickened with me, raised with me, seated with me, I will abide in you.” And look what happens. When the light bulb is seated in the socket the energy that the light bulb didn't generate from another source, flows through the light bulb and the light bulb becomes incandescent and that is what he wants to do with us. He wants to have the very resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ flow through us until we become incandescent with his presence. But he said it is conditional. You abide in me. Now that has to mean something. And until you get something clearer or better why don't you take what I have said it means and if we find out it means something else we will both change, but until it does, let's make it work, because it works. Let's make it work.

Shall we pray?

Father, there are more people here tonight than there were nearly twice or three times as many as they were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. There are enough people here to change the world for thy dear Son. But if we neglect so great salvation we are going to not only be buffeted and harassed by our ancient foe, ensnared by the world, defeated by the flesh, we are going to rob the Lord Jesus of the glory that seems his due, that much fruit that he declared we could bear and we are going to stand before him ashamed of his coming. And so, Father, somehow tonight we are asking that thou by the Holy Spirit will breathe upon us and that there will come to our hearts an insatiable desire not just to know the truth. Thy word says if we know these things happy are we if we do them, not just once, but every day. And so to that end, Father, we are asking that thou by the Holy Spirit will press the Word in upon our hearts. If there be those who have special need tonight that thou hast made them aware of, give them the wisdom and the judgment with sense to deal with it before they leave the house. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.