

Seven Basic Studies: Enjoying Our Blessings

John Walden

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Foreword

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Dedicated to the Lord in memory of John Walden by his wife Nan

I wish to thank all those who helped get this material together among whom are

Mrs. Dorothy Kellogg, John's sister, who designed the cover, Lt. Col. Clifford H. Franz, Mr. Jack Hardwick, Miss Elaine Nelson, and Peter J. Pell who wrote the Foreword.

—Mrs. John Walden

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Mrs. John Walden

Colorado Springs, CO

John Walden —Servant of God

Born— Sept. 1, 1905

Born again— Dec. 31, 1911

Began preaching at age 15

Laid aside his armor June 6, 1979

Servant of God, well done! Rest from thy loved employ;

The battle fought, the victory won, enter thy Master's joy.

The pains of death are past; labor and sorrow cease;

And, life's long warfare closed at last, thy soul is found in peace.

Rest from thy labor, rest, soul of the just, set free;
Blest be thy memory, and blest thy bright example be.
Now, toil and conflict o'er, go, take with saints thy place;
But go, as each has gone before, a sinner saved by
grace.

Soldier of Christ, well done! Praise be thy new employ;
And, while eternal ages run, rest in thy Saviour's joy.

—James Montgomery, 1771-1854

Foreword

Our beloved brother John Walden of Colorado Springs, Colorado, was one of God's choicest gifts to the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. He served not only his own generation well, but he faithfully and uniquely served the next.

Saved at the early age of six, John immediately manifested a desire to serve the Lord. When he was 15, his brethren showed their confidence in him by making him Sunday school superintendent. He began preaching the same year. For more than thirty years he taught the Colorado Springs city-wide Bible Class.

"Brother John" excelled in the preaching of the Gospel, speaking with great clarity and authority. He left no doubt as to where he stood on matters that effected the truth whether in the Gospel or in the Doctrines of Scripture. He was also a recognized student of the Word of God which was evidenced in his lifelong ministry to the people of God. Like the Apostle Paul, our brother shouldered the burden of the care of the assemblies in the Colorado Springs area. Giving himself unsparingly to

the work of the Lord, he accepted many invitations for special meetings and conferences in other places.

Another important part of our brother's service for the Lord was the radio work and the cassette lending library ministry. The messages contained in this book are printed very much as he spoke them. You will enjoy reading them. At the time of the printing of this booklet his taped messages, through the years, are still being broadcast, as well as his "Minute with the Bible" telephone messages which are changed daily and enjoyed especially by the elderly and shut-ins. Thus, "he [John Walden] being dead yet speaketh."

In spite of suffering much from physical difficulties, for many years, our brother persevered in his multiple services for the Lord. Every ounce of strength or surge of energy was applied to the furtherance of the work he loved so well.

Due to migraine headaches and increasing deafness, our brother's activities- among the young were somewhat curtailed in later life, but not his interest. Is it not his work among the young that has made him the unique servant of the Lord in the minds of all who knew him?

His stories and apt illustrations, his down-to-earth manner, and his hearty way of talking, opened the hearts of all ages to him, and God blessed his efforts.

Well do I remember the first time "Brother John" and I met. It was at a Chicago conference many years ago. My age prevented me from hearing him speak on that particular occasion, for he was speaking to the boys and girls—a thing he loved to do.

Later on, and for many years, as one of the contributors to “The Sunday School Teachers’ Lesson Manual” he was able to exercise that gift in teaching adults to reach the youth with divine truth. The initials J.W. first appeared in the Teachers’ Manual in 1949. Our brother was a faithful contributor until 1977, providing the magazine with a wealth of material.

It was not only my privilege to be associated with Brother John in the service of the Sunday School Teachers’ Manual and in various parts of the country, but it was also my privilege to have visited the work in which his wife Nan shared an important part, and which started in their own home—the cares and responsibilities of the Christian Home for Children in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This work was begun five years after their marriage in 1936 when they helped a needy boy by taking him into their heart and home. Later it was another child and then a few more until it resulted in caring for more than 600 children—as many as 56 at one time.

The outreach of this service is beyond our comprehension. The way God worked, and is still working, in answer to the prayers of His people on behalf of this work brings forth much praise and thanksgiving to the One whom our brother found to be faithful in and through it all.

In closing this brief tribute to my dear brother and co-worker in Christ, it seems as though I can almost hear the words of commendation sounding forth from the lips of the Lord Jesus Himself as John Walden entered His presence:

“WELL DONE... GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT...
ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD.”

—Peter J. Pell

1. The Love of God

We love Him, because He first loved us. —1 John 4:19

Most people are interested in their own possessions, but I find that Christians have a great deal more than they realize and more than they are possessing and enjoying. Let's have a little Bible reading about the Love of God.

Read from First John, the fourth chapter, beginning at verse nine. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Now this statement certainly proves beyond any shadow of a doubt, by means of referring us to the Cross of Calvary, that God does love us. There may be someone listening to my voice who doubts the love of God. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." I have two sons. I couldn't force myself to give either of those sons for the best man who ever lived, let alone for a world of sinners. But God proved His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. God loves us! Now, verses 11 through 16a —

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the

Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us."

I'm sure all of you have known—have you believed God's love? "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (v. 16b).

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love Him, because He first loved us" (vv. 17 through 19).

I suppose one of the reasons for doubting the love of God is a sense of our own unworthiness. I know there is no reason why God should love me. I wasn't so irresistible. I was just a sinner and God knew all about me. I recognized my unworthiness. But God didn't love us for what we are. There's an old song that goes, "I wonder what He saw in me to suffer such deep agony." Well, let me let you in on a little secret—He didn't see a thing! That isn't why He loved you. He loved you because it's His character. He is love.

Not only did God love the whole world, as that wonderful verse, John 3:16, tells us: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever, believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," but we are told also that Christ loved the church. Specifically, in the fifth chapter of Ephesians.

And then Paul says in Galatians 2:20, "...the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." John, the

beloved apostle, seemed to grasp this more than most for he called himself, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

Now the manner of the love of God, I’d like to say, is not a complacent love. It isn’t because He is so pleased with us, even after we’ve become Christians, but it is a compassionate love.

And I would like to say, too, that God loves us in the same way He loves His Son. That is, to the same degree. We are told that we are loved as the Father loves the Son.

Some of you may be wondering if He is going to continue to love you. Well, did He have any reason to begin? If He had no reason to start loving you, is He going to quit? In Jeremiah 31:3 He calls this love an “everlasting love.” And in the Song of Solomon, chapter eight, and verse seven, He says, “Many waters cannot quench love.” This kind of love is enduring.

I suppose everyone loves the eighth chapter of Romans. That chapter begins by telling us: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” and it ends by telling us that nothing can “separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If you feel your unworthiness just now, God hasn’t changed a bit. It is only you who change. I change, but not God. I change, He changes not. “No change Jehovah knows,” the old song says. And that’s very true.

Now God has proven His love to us, not only at Calvary, but think of His lovingkindness. And this is a word that seems to be peculiar to the Bible. It is used thirty times: Lovingkindness. We don’t use that word very much—

maybe because there isn't much kindness in our love for one another. But God is kind to us.

And the love of God is the love that brings us into sonship because He says in First John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." That's what we are. Because God loved us, He made us His own children. Now I may love someone enough to spare him some trouble or punishment, but to love him enough to make him my own son is quite another thing. And that's what God has done to us. Some of you who come to God with fear and trembling, almost afraid to ask God for something, do you realize that you are His own dear child? That as Christ is, so are we in this world? That we have not only "boldness in the day of judgment," as we read in First John, but we have liberty, or boldness, to come into the very presence of God—to pray, to talk to Him, to be at home with Him,—all because He loves us so much. When you know a person loves you, you feel at home in his company.

Another proof of the love of God for us, in everyday life, is chastisement. Now you may not have thought of it this way, but He says, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). The very trouble some of you are going through right now may be a proof God loves you! He doesn't want you to go on in a way that is displeasing to Him, so He's bringing you back to Himself with a little chastening.

Then, when we love someone, we like to spend time with them. We're told in the fourteenth chapter of John that God showed His love to us in that He wants to live with

us. He says He will love us and will make His abode with us.

Now think about the effects of the love of God in our lives. We just read together in First John 4 that we are given “boldness in the day of judgment.” I think that means we have no fear about meeting God about our sins. Some people live in constant fear that maybe their sins aren’t forgiven after all; that maybe they’ll be lost after all. Well, read that verse over—see what it says. He wants you to be “rooted and grounded in love” as we read in Ephesians 3:17. The result of being rooted and grounded in love is that we’ll come to know the love of Christ better than we do. The word for “know” here is a word that means “full knowledge.” He wants you to know, by revelation, how very much He loves you.

Another effect of the love of God is that we are brought to love Him. The more you read of the love of God, the more you believe God’s love, the more response there will be in your heart to God, and you’ll love Him in return. And you’ll love His Word, and you’ll love His people, and you’ll love the souls of the unconverted, “We love... because He first loved us.”

We are told in Second Corinthians 5:14 that the love of God “constrains us.” Now this isn’t restraint, like the Law restrains people—holds them back from sinning. This is constraint. He pulls us with Himself. The love of God leads us along and makes us want to please Him. And we judge that since He died for us, and we have died with Him, we are not now our own but we belong to Him. The love of God constrains us, pulls us with Himself, makes us live in a way that we would not and

could not without this constraining power of the love of God.

Do you believe the love of God? First of all, have you ever believed that God loved you and gave His Son for you? And have you ever thanked Him? If not, this would be a good time to do so. Just bow your head and tell God that you have turned His love away, you have not believed His love, but you do believe Him now. And if you do believe Him, and if you have believed Him before, why not believe that love more and enjoy it more. Revel in it. Live in it—day by day. God would like to have you enjoy these things which we have as believers. The children of Israel did not enjoy their possessions because they did not go in and possess them.

Our Father, we thank Thee for the Lord Jesus, a proof of Thy love to us. We thank Thee for daily proofs. We pray that Thou wilt direct our hearts into the love of God and enable us as believers to keep ourselves in the love of God, to enjoy and to show to others that we believe this love. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

2. God's Righteousness

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith...

—Romans 1:17

Because we have no righteousness of our own that is acceptable to God, He has provided for us through the Gospel a righteousness that will make us fit for His own presence. I'd like to have a little Bible reading with you about that.

Beginning in Romans, the first chapter, at verse sixteen, we read: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Now we often think of the love of God being revealed in the Gospel, and certainly it was and is. But here He tells us that the righteousness of God is revealed in the Gospel. That is, by means of the Gospel—the story of the death, burial and resurrection of our Saviour—God is able to show us how He can be just, and the Justifier of them that believe in Jesus, as we learn in the third chapter of Romans.

The words "just," "justify," "righteous," "righteousness,"—all of these words are related words, and they have to do with the holiness of God and God's desire to bring us into a right standing—a right position with Himself.

In the tenth chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul writes about the Jewish people (his own people): “I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

You see, the Jewish people were intent upon establishing their own righteousness. All of us have a certain amount of this self-righteousness about us, and we feel there surely must be something we can do to make ourselves acceptable with God, but in Isaiah 64:6 He tells us, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” in His sight. You and I have nothing to offer God. I don’t know if you are prepared to accept that or not, but I’d like you to study it a bit and think about it. Read the Scriptures carefully and thoughtfully and see if you can’t come to a right understanding of this matter. We just read here, in the

tenth of Romans, that God has not called on us to do some great exploit. We don't even need to bring Christ down from above, or bring Him up again from the dead. All this has been done. Now He says, with the, heart man believeth unto righteousness. Let's see if we can understand this.

First of all, I'd like to distinguish between self-righteousness and God's righteousness. The Scriptures we've read make that distinction. Then I'd like also to distinguish between Christ's personal righteousness and the righteousness of God that we're talking about. In other words, the Lord Jesus, personally, was righteous. His righteous life does not make you acceptable to God. His righteous life proved Him to be the Son of God, proved Him to be the worthy sacrifice, but that is His own intrinsic righteousness. Now what we're talking about is a righteousness which God can account to you. In other words, God can give you credit for a righteousness which you do not have, not by just saying so, but by actually imputing it to you.

We have a wonderful illustration of that in the prodigal son. You remember when he came back to the father, he was clothed with filthy rags, and when he came to the father confessing his guilt the father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." What was this "best robe"? Well, it was something which the father had in his house, which would make this unworthy, filthy wretch of a son worthy to come in among the others.

Clothing in the Bible is often used as a type of righteousness. You remember, back in the Garden of Eden, when man sinned, his first thought was to clothe

himself. And he didn't do a very good job of it. None of us has done a very good job of it since! His fig leaf apron didn't even satisfy himself, because as soon as God appeared he hid behind a tree. But God has a "best robe" for us—the best robe of heaven, the righteousness of God. God is able to give us a right standing before Himself. Now how does all this happen?

First of all, we learn in the first chapter of Ephesians, verse four, that this was part of God's eternal purpose. God planned all this. We didn't think it out. We're told in Colossians 3:12 that we're called to this. God has elected us to this. And we have seen in Romans ten that it is obtained by faith. It comes to us through the Gospel. The good news is that, though we have sinned, God's Son came, died in our place, righteously put away all sin so that God is now able to give us a right standing through Christ. We are made the righteousness of God in Him. Our sins have been forgiven because of Him. Our evil nature has been hidden through Him. He is our righteousness.

Let's get away from the idea of religion now. Do not think about a system of doing on our own, let's think of a Person. We're told in First Corinthians 1:30 that Christ Jesus of God "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." In fact, one of the Names of God in the Old Testament (Jer. 23:6) is Jehovah-Tsidkenu. That Hebrew word means, "The Lord our Righteousness."

When you think about meeting God, do you immediately think about something you've done? Some accomplishment or some worthiness of your own? Some

earnest sincerity of your own? Or do you think about Christ?

Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6:11) that they had been pretty bad. He mentioned some of the things which people do, and he said, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified [i. e., given a right standing] in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." This is our new standing.

Paul refers to this in the third chapter of Philippians by writing that his desire is to "be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that... righteousness which is of God by faith." Now, if such a great one as the Apostle Paul was satisfied to be nothing more than what God had made him, to want no righteousness of his own, but to stand in the righteousness of God, how glad you and I ought to be!

Now, of course, our state is to be brought up to our standing. He tells us in First Corinthians 5 that this is what we are; now, He says, this is what I'd like you to be. In other words, since God has made us righteousness we should act righteously. We should "put on the new man," Ephesians 4 states. We should put on the right actions of a Christian. We should "follow after righteousness" (1 Tim. 6:11).

All of this is said to be the "fruit" of righteousness. In fact, even the chastening of the people by God in Hebrews 12 is given that we might be partakers of His holiness, that we might be a little bit more like Him.

If you'd like a nice Bible reading about this, in addition to what we've had together, read the third chapter of Zechariah. There you will find Joshua, even though he was a High Priest, was clothed in filthy garments. His

own self-righteousness was not good enough for the presence of God, and so God clothed him with a change of raiment. Have you been clothed? And if you aren't clothed, are you satisfied with that raiment? He wants us to appreciate and enjoy the fact we have been given a right standing with God. Let's thank Him.

Our Father, we do thank Thee for the Lord Jesus. We thank Thee for giving us a right standing. We thank Thee that He died and rose again that we might be brought into Thy family, that we might be counted right with Thee. Help us to appreciate this. Help us to enjoy the liberty we have. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

3. God's Life

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. —John 3:36

Something possessed by every Christian, but not enjoyed by all, is Eternal Life. Let's have a little Bible reading about the life of God as given to us.

In the third chapter of the Gospel according to John, the Lord Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born again, or from above. It isn't enough to be born of the flesh, we need to be born of the Spirit of God. We need to be born into God's family. In so being born into God's family we receive God's life. He says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Then the last verse of chapter three reads, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." I suppose you know that wonderful 24th verse of chapter five: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Now I think definitions are in order. What do we mean by saying, "eternal life," "everlasting life"? Are we just talking about its duration? I hardly think so. In fact, the Lord Jesus is defined in the second verse of the first

epistle of John, and, again in the 20th verse of the last chapter of First John, as “Eternal Life.”

The life of God is seen in a Person. When the Lord Jesus Christ lived here among men, when He was here on the earth, He was God manifest in the flesh. And the life of God is eternal life. The Lord Jesus Christ is eternal life. That’s why He says, “He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Now let’s look at it from this viewpoint first of all. You and I do not have this kind of life by nature. God created man in the first place, capable of enjoying God, having fellowship with God. He was right with God, but something happened. God isn’t responsible for the condition man is in today. We’re like this because of sin. And we’re told in Ephesians 2:1, “And you hath He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” In the fourth chapter of Ephesians we’re said to be “alienated from the life” that is in Christ. That’s why the Lord Jesus said, “Ye must be born again” or “from above.” We do not have the life of God in us by nature.

I don’t believe in the dogma, the doctrine, of the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man, for the simple reason that it is not taught in the Bible! I know that there is a sense in which we are all related because we’re all created of God, but we’re not the children of God except by faith in Christ Jesus according to the book of Galatians. In fact, the Lord Jesus said about some who were very religious—religious leaders—“Ye are of your father, the devil.” In that same second chapter of Ephesians, He says we were all “by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Quite evidently, we cannot be the children of

God and the children of wrath, the children of the devil.
So we need God's life.

Christ, Himself, is the source of this life. He is the source of all life. He is the Creator of all. The first chapter of John establishes the fact that everything was created by Him and through Him. In the fifth chapter of John, He made the stupendous claim that the Father hath given to the Son to have life in Himself, even as the Father hath life in Himself. That's why the Lord Jesus is named (in the third chapter of Acts, verse 15) the Prince of Life. He is the Source, He is the Prince—the Ruler. He is the One from whom we must receive life.

Now, how do we receive life? I know there are some who believe we receive eternal life by baptism when we are little babies, but what does the Word of God say?

First of all, we're told in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We read together in John's Gospel that we receive eternal life by believing in Him.

I like the way it's put in the first chapter of John. In the 12th and 13th verses he tells us as plainly as words can tell us, "But as many as received Him," (the Lord Jesus) "to them gave He power [or the right] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born..." You and I are born when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

Now what does it mean to receive Him? If you were ill and a doctor were brought to your bedside and the doctor said to you, "I think we can fix you up all right if you're willing to follow my course of treatment," and you say, "All right, doctor, you take over." What have you done? You have accepted a doctor.

In marriage you accept a life mate. It isn't so difficult to understand this. You simply receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. In other words, you put your trust in Him. You put your confidence in Him. You depend on Him. He says, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power [or the right] to become the sons of God..."

When we receive the Lord Jesus He gives us assurance that we do have eternal life. First John 5:13 says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life..." Maybe you didn't know that. Maybe you just thought that God had forgiven you. Maybe you didn't really know that you do have, at the present moment, eternal life. Well, read First John 5:13 and then believe it and thank God that you do have at the present moment, eternal life. And having it, we are to enjoy this life by feeding upon Christ who is the Bread of Life. You see, when a baby is born he has life, but he doesn't have much development yet. He doesn't know very much, he can't do very much. That life which is just as real in a tiny baby as in his father or grandfather has to be developed, it has to grow. That's how we come to have life abundantly.

The effects of eternal life are always of interest to us. First of all, a new relationship has been established. Because we have the life of God in our souls, we are the children of God. We don't know yet what we're going to be like "but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ..." the reason being that we are like Him now. We have the same life of God in our souls that Christ Himself possessed.

With that comes a new standing. Because we are the children of God, we have a new relationship to God, we are able to come into His presence and speak freely to Him and call Him our Father. Now, of course, with this new relationship comes a new safety. It's wonderful to be bound up in the same bundle of life with Him.

With that new life comes a new nature. Galatians 2:20 tells us that we have been "crucified with Christ: nevertheless," says Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

This new life even fits us for the new sphere. We could never go to heaven as a mere human being, but when God takes us to heaven He is going to fit even our bodies for that new place. All of this is because we are now the children of God. We have God's life. A new fellowship has been established. We have fellowship with Him because we have the very life of God in our beings. He understands us and we understand Him, and we have fellowship together. Christ, who is our life, one of these days is going to appear, and then we are going to appear with Him in glory. Let's thank Him for this wonderful possession of the life of God.

Our Father, we do thank Thee Thou hast given Thy Son for us, and in Him the very life of God in our souls. We thank Thee we belong to Thee. We ask Thy blessings now, in our Saviour's precious Name. Amen.

4. God's Peace

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. —Colossians 3:15

One of the greatest possessions in a world like ours is Peace. We're not always enjoying what God has given to us. I'd like to have a little Bible reading with you just now about the Peace of God, and Peace with God, which we as believers have and should be enjoying.

From Romans, the fifth chapter, we read, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He has just been telling us, in the preceding chapter, that Abraham was counted righteous with God; and David described the happiness of the man to whom God imputed righteousness apart from works saying, "Blessed" (or happy) "is the man whose sins are forgiven..." Then he tells us, all of this was not written just for his sake alone...but "for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is not a peaceful feeling. This is a state of peace, just as peace is declared following a war, upon agreement of certain terms. So we who were once the enemies of God have been brought to God through faith in the Lord Jesus and things are right between God and us. And we have peace with God.

Now I know there are immature believers, believers who are not too well taught, who are not enjoying this peace

with God. They do not realize what it means to have a place of fellowship with God, to be at peace with God, to be at home in the presence of God. If possible, I would like to help you enter into the enjoyment of your possessions as a believer—to know that you have peace with God, that things are right and settled.

This can only be, as we read here, because we are justified by faith. Because we have a right standing with God, because we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for no other reason can we have this peace with God.

There is also the peace of God in Philippians, chapter four, where we read in verse six: “Be careful for nothing” (that’s the old English word, “full of care” or as we would say, “Be anxious for nothing”); “but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God [that is, God’s kind of peace], which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

It’s possible, then, for us to have peace with God, and the peace of God. This is contrary to nature. We’re told several times in the Old Testament that there is no peace. Isaiah tells us, “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” “The wicked are like the troubled sea, that cast up mire and dirt.”

Of course, there is such a thing as a false peace. Jeremiah warns against this. He writes, “Some have healed the hurt of the daughters of my people slightly, saying, Peace, Peace, where there is no peace.” Some of you may have a false peace. You may be depending on your own good works. You may think because you’ve

always been a pretty good sort of person that you don't have to worry about meeting God.

Or, maybe you're depending on the merits of your church, or some ordinances. Or maybe you have a false peace because somebody who should know, who should have authority, has said to you, "Now don't you worry. You're a fine person. Everything will be all right." Well, I'd like to see you disturbed about that if you have that kind of peace. I'd like to see you want to get peace from God.

God is said to be the author of peace in First Corinthians 14:33, and our Saviour is called the Prince of Peace in that wonderful prophecy in Isaiah 9. So God Himself must be the source of true peace.

Notice how most of the epistles in the New Testament begin with "Grace and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Where else could we get real peace, except from Him who shows us real grace? I have no right to be at peace in the presence of God because of who I am, but I have every right to be at peace in the presence of God because of who God is and because of what He has done for me. I have peace with God by faith in Him.

The kind of peace that God gives us is His own peace. It's possible to be at peace, to have no disturbance of thought, because where God lives there's no disturbance. That's why He calls it the peace of God.

The Lord Jesus said in the fourteenth chapter of John, verse 27: My "peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." Then He said in the sixteenth chapter, "In the world you will have tribulation," but in Me you have peace. So we're not going to find peace anywhere else.

We're not going to find it because of circumstances. I remember a man saying to my father when he first became a Christian, "Billy, what do you think about the Scripture that says, 'Rejoice in the Lord always'?" My father said, "I suppose it depends a good bit on circumstances." "Ah, no," he said, "it does not say to rejoice in circumstances. We can't do that. But it says, 'Rejoice in the Lord.' " So whatever your circumstances are it is possible for you to have peace in God.

You need not be disturbed about your sins, for the Lord Jesus has taken them away. You need not be disturbed about your future, because He has promised to look after that.

Back in the 26th chapter of Isaiah, he says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." That's the kind of peace God offers—perfect peace.

Then we read in Second Thessalonians 3 that He wants to give us peace always. It's possible to be at peace with God even though we are very aware of our shortcomings. It's possible to have the peace of God ruling in our hearts even though we are very aware of conditions in the world about us. You may be very disturbed about what you read in the papers and hear over the radio, but you need not be disturbed about your future if it is in the hands of God. That's why He says in Colossians 3:15, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." The peace of God is able to control all of our feelings and emotions because we know God—because we know He's dependable.

Now for a Christian, the meek and quiet spirit, which characterizes those who are resting in the peace of God,

is said to be an ornament. God is glorified. God is honored when His people are meek and quiet and restful. Let me ask you now, fellow Christians, Are you meek? Are you restful? Are you trustful, or are you all disturbed? I suppose there are times when Christians need special help because of physical infirmities and mental disturbances, but ordinarily the best tranquilizing pill I can think of would be the promises of God. Turn to the Word of God and get this restfulness the Psalmist David knew when he said, in the close of the fourth Psalm, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for Thou, Lord, only makes me dwell in safety." It's possible for us to be extremely restful in spite of the conditions that are all around us.

How is this possible? I would like to tell you, first of all, that peace is one of the graces included in the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5 tells us the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..." and continues on to name other things. Nine graces which should be marking the life of the believer who is led by the Spirit of God. This isn't something you can produce yourself or drum up inside of you. This is something the Spirit of God produces as He has an opportunity to work in your hearts by faith.

From the fourteenth chapter of John—everybody knows that wonderful verse: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." I think that's the secret of an untroubled heart: We believe in Him. When Paul was on the ship and about to be shipwrecked, and everybody was so terribly disturbed, even the old seasoned sailors were awfully disturbed. Things were bad—they hadn't seen the sun in about three weeks. Paul said, "Sirs, I believe God." His confidence in God gave the rest of them peace and they all took time out to

have a little lunch. "I believe God." That's what gave him peace.

Suppose things look bad to you. What do you do? Turn to Him in prayer. Leave it all with Him. Put your confidence in Him. "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The Lord said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."

Let me close with the wonderful prayer in the sixth chapter of Numbers: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." In Jesus' Name. Amen.

5. God's Wisdom

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God... James 1:5

Perhaps no one listening to me is perfectly satisfied with his own intelligence—except maybe the very young. And yet the apostle John writes, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” One of the possessions given to every believer, and which I am afraid very few of us appreciate and make use of, is the Wisdom of God. God has given to us divine wisdom. Let’s have a little Bible reading about it.

Colossians, the second chapter, informs us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the source and receptacle of all wisdom. It states in verse three, “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” The epistle to the Colossians was written, partly at least, to offset an evil teaching of the first and second centuries, a philosophy very strong in early days of the church, called “Gnosticism.” That’s the very opposite of the agnostic belief. An agnostic says, “I don’t know anything.” The Gnostic says, “I know everything, and you Christians will have to come to me and get some of this high-powered knowledge I have.” So the Spirit of God led Paul to write this book of Colossians to tell the believers that we have super-knowledge. He uses the strongest word for knowledge—we have super-knowledge in the Lord Jesus because in Him “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Now that doesn’t mean that every believer is drawing from that source, because he prays in the ninth verse of chapter one: “For this cause we also, since the day we

heard it [that is, heard about them being Christians], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” Then he goes on to say that we might come into the full knowledge of God. So God wants us to be using and appreciating and valuing, more than we do, His divine wisdom which He has given to us in the Lord Jesus.

Now in the third chapter of Titus, verse three, we read that we “were sometimes foolish, disobedient,” etc. At one time every one of us was foolish. We didn’t think so. No, we were quite well-pleased with ourselves. We considered ourselves to be very well equipped, intellectually. But Romans 12:16 warns us not to be “wise in your own conceits.” The only kind of wisdom we had is what’s called “worldly wisdom.” In First Corinthians, the first chapter, we read in verse 21, “The world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching [that is, what seemed to the world a very foolish subject] to save them that believe.” And in the third chapter of First Corinthians we read that we had only a worldly kind of wisdom which failed completely to bring us into a relationship with God.

Now what can we do if we’re to have the wisdom of God? Well, first of all we must admit our own ignorance. Well, maybe your I.Q. is extra high. Perhaps you have gone to school more than the average. But if you’re going to be taught of God you are going to have to come to Him humbly, and be willing to be taught. An admission of our own ignorance, I think, is the first requisite to acquiring the wisdom of God.

We're told back in the book of Proverbs repeatedly that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Now actually the Lord Jesus Himself is said to be wisdom. The eighth chapter of Proverbs speaks of wisdom as personification of Christ. In First Corinthians 1:30 we are informed that the Lord Jesus is made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

So everything God has for us in the way of divine wisdom is in His Son. Because He is God, He has what we call omniscience—that is, all knowledge. God knows everything. God knows the end from the beginning. It's true that the Lord Jesus limited Himself to the knowledge which His Father saw fit to give Him while He was here upon this earth. Nevertheless, He was truly God. Our Lord Jesus, exalted to the right hand of God, is the source of all real wisdom.

Now this wisdom is really offered to us. We read, in the eleventh chapter of Romans, verse 33, that all the riches of wisdom are offered to us. Now this wisdom which comes from above is ours for the asking. According to James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not..." Do you know why we don't get more wisdom from God? Do you know why we go blundering through life, making so many mistakes? It is because we're so conceited that we think we can manage it ourselves. Incidentally, that's the reason we have no real peace about our lives. I suppose everybody knows that wonderful verse about "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." You know, that's the last part of a sentence. The first part says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." If you're going

to have real peace about your life, you're going to have to be humble and dependent upon God.

Now, we read in Colossians 1 that He would like to have us filled with His knowledge. Notice that there is progressive knowledge here in Colossians 1 —

To begin with, we read, "... the word of the truth of the gospel ... is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth." Now that's the first thing we learn. That's the first knowledge—wisdom which we get from God: to know the "grace of God in truth." Let me ask you, do you know the grace of God in truth? I mean by that, do you know what it is to have your sins put away by grace, by the precious blood of Christ? Do you know what it is to be right with God, by grace? That is, nothing which you deserve, but which God offered to you in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, if you haven't started there, you haven't started!

But if you have started, that's only a beginning, because in verse nine we learn that we ought to "...be filled with the knowledge of His will..." Now I believe that means more than simply His will in my individual life, but His purposes, His plan! Do you know what God is doing? Are you familiar with God's program? Do you know what God is doing in the present day? Are you intelligent as to God's ways and doings?

Then, in the tenth verse, He says we should be going on to increase "in the knowledge of God." Actually there's nothing higher than knowing God.

In the second chapter of First John you have these three stages of knowledge. There he speaks of children, young men, and fathers. And he says, in effect, "Children, you

know your sins are forgiven. You know God as your Father.” You might call that elementary knowledge. Then, to the young men, “You know the Word of God. You’re strong. You’re overcoming the wicked one.” That’s growth. And to the fathers, “You know Him who is from the beginning.” And there is no knowledge beyond that! Knowing God. Knowing Him as a trustworthy God and Father.

Now, some of you are wanting knowledge, perhaps; wanting wisdom, or direct guidance in your lives. Here’s a nice little promise. Psalm 25:9: “The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way.” If you are really willing to be taught, God will teach you. God will show you. God will guide you. I think we need to spend a little time in God’s presence first of all and make sure we want His will! Our hearts are so deceitful that sometimes we think we want to be taught of God, we want His wisdom, yet we don’t want it at all.

The first way, the first thing to do to get wisdom from God is to turn to His Word. The Spirit of God never guides us contrary to the Word of God. Turn to the Word of God.

Then, act on what you know. Then, consider the providential dealings of God in your life—the circumstances. These would be dangerous apart from the Word of God and the conviction of the Spirit of God within-, but as you turn to Him, really seeking His wisdom, you’ll find that God has resources which you never dreamed were yours—because you have Christ!

Our Father, we ask You to help all of us to know Thee better, to know Thy Word better, to draw upon Thee, the

resources of wisdom given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whose Name we give Thee our thanks. Amen.

6. God's Strength

“...the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward. — Ephesians 1:19

Let's have a little Bible reading about one of the great possessions of believers which I fear is not being appreciated and enjoyed as it should be. From the fourth chapter of Philippians, verse 13, I read, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” I suppose the most common complaint of believers is, “I feel so weak. I don't seem to be able to do what I'd like to be able to do.” Well, God has given us certain possessions. He wants us to possess those possessions. He wants us to make use of them!

First of all (and we can be perfectly sure of this) we have no strength of our own. Romans 5:6 reads, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Unless you've realized this, you haven't even started. If you feel you can make it pretty well by yourself, if you feel you can lift yourself by your own bootstraps, you haven't yet learned the first secret of the power of God in your heart and life. We have nothing of ourselves. That's the way God chose us. He picked us up when we were poor and weak and despised and helpless things, according to First Corinthians 1:27. This is not only true of us as unbelievers—we had no strength, no power, we could not save ourselves—it is still true of us as believers! The Lord Jesus told His own, in the fifteenth chapter of John, verse five, “Without Me ye can do nothing.” Severed from Him, you can do nothing. You can't produce anything in your own strength any more than you could before you became a Christian.

Actually, our strength lies in our weakness, because as Paul writes in Second Corinthians 12:10, “For when I am weak, then am I strong.” How does that work out? What’s the real meaning behind that?

Well, the Lord said to Paul, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” What kind of people does God save? Why, He saves people who are helpless. He saves people who are hopeless. He saves people who are lost. That may be the reason why some of my hearers have never really become children of God. You’ve never come to the end of your own resources. You still feel fairly capable. You feel like you’re going to be able to make it with maybe a little assistance from the Lord, but that isn’t God’s way. He doesn’t assist people. The Lord Jesus is not a Helper in salvation, He is the Saviour! And unless you are willing to put your confidence completely in Him and trust His finished work you’re never going to know peace with God at all. The same is true of us as believers, because His strength is made perfect in weakness. The apostle Paul said, “When I am weak, then am I strong.”

The Lord sent a message to the little church at Philadelphia in Revelation 3:8, saying to them, “Thou hast a little strength.” Now that was the secret of their strength—it was that they had only a little. They drew from Him.

In Romans 1:16 we’re told, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” The word there for “power” is the word from which we get our word “dynamite” or “dynamo”—the source of power. The Gospel is powerful! It works! That’s why Paul said he was not ashamed of it.

He knew it works. He knew it was effective—and I know it too. I've watched it work in many, many lives. I've watched it work in my own life.

Now we read in First Peter 1:5 that we are “kept by the power of God.” There are some Christians who believe that the power of God is enough to save them, but they don't believe the power of God is enough to keep them. They think that, now that the Lord has wound them up and started them going, it's up to them to make it. Well, how long could you go in your own strength!-No, we are kept by the power of God.

Now that power, according to the first chapter of Ephesians, verses 19 and 20, is the same power that worked in Christ when it raised Him up again from the dead. It is resurrection power! It is the power that takes a dead person and stands him on his feet. That's the power that works in the life of a believer. The power of God. Entirely apart from human resources, from human energy, the power of God effectively works in our lives and leads us on to do exploits for Him.

Now this power must come from God, Himself, through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the energy of the Holy Spirit of God—“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6). The Holy Spirit in this age is God's medium of power in the life of those who are believers. You remember He said, just before He ascended, “Tarry in Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.” And He also said, “Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come” (Acts 1:8). In Second Timothy 1:7 He is even called the “Spirit of power.” The source of power then for us as believers, is His Holy Spirit.

Now, why does He want the power of God to operate in our lives? Well, He tells us in the third chapter of Ephesians that the power of God operates in us in order that we might know these divine things. We haven't any ability in ourselves to appreciate these spiritual things. In that same chapter, in verse 16, He tells us that the power of God is given to us that we may enjoy these things. We need strength from God, even when we read our Bibles, that we might be able to enjoy spiritual things. That's why, when I pick up my Bible, I like to make sure that the Spirit of God is not grieved—so that He'll be able to teach me. If I'm not conscious of any sin in my life, I sometimes ask the Lord to point out anything that isn't right, so that with His help I can set it right. An ungrieved Spirit can teach and help me enjoy the good things I have in Christ.

Then in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, verse 10, we are told that we are armed with the might of the Lord to stand for Him in combat. Every day we are opposed by Satan and his henchmen in the enjoyment of spiritual things, attempting to keep us from entering into our possessions in Christ, and we need this divine power for combat.

In the first chapter of Colossians, verse 11, we are strengthened with the might of the Lord "unto all patience." You mothers of little children know how much you need patience. You shepherds of the flock, who have to help Christians who ought to be helping themselves, know how much patience it takes. You who are trying to lead someone to Christ (and you've been patiently dealing with and praying for them these many years) know how much patience it takes. And you who are getting up in years, you wonder why the Lord doesn't

take you home. You've been looking for the Lord's return these many years, and He hasn't come yet—well, you need the power of God in your heart and life to strengthen you to all patience.

Then in Second Corinthians 3:18 we learn that this power operates in our lives to make us Christlike. That's what the Spirit of God is trying to do with us. It isn't your valuable service that He's after—He's wanting to reproduce Christ in your lives. Paul said, "My little children of whom I travail again in birth until Christ be formed in you." As we gaze upon the Lord Jesus we are changed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of God wants to make us like Christ.

Well now, this is true for every believer. This source is given to every believer because First Corinthians 12:13 tells us, "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body"; and in the tenth chapter of the Acts, when the Gospel was preached, it says, "The Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word." So, if you've heard His Word, you've been born of God, you have the Holy Spirit of God indwelling you—you do not need to pray or wait for the Holy Spirit—but what you do need to do is be careful that you do not feel self-sufficient. Most of our trouble is that we think we're rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. We try to walk in our own strength, and we pile up. We just go down—like the Laodiceans. Or, we look to the wrong place. We look to ourselves. We think the Lord has helped me so far so I should have developed a little strength of myself, and then we find ourselves failing again. You have nothing more than you had when you first received the Lord Jesus, and you need nothing more. God wants you to find

all you need, nothing more. God wants you to find all you need in His Son. Let's bow our heads and thank Him.

Our Father, we thank Thee for giving us the Lord Jesus, and we thank Thee that with Him Thou hast freely given us all things. We thank Thee for the Spirit of God and His presence and the divine power operating in our lives. Help us then, like Paul, to say I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. We pray in His Name. Amen.

7. God's Possessions

...that ye through His poverty might be rich. —2
Corinthians 8:9

Before we begin our Bible reading I'd like to say "thank you" to all of you who have written cards and letters or have telephoned. We're always glad when we feel the program is being a help to some of our friends who listen.

I'd like to read a little bit about God's possessions as He shares them with us. If there's anything that characterizes the American people today, it is covetousness—wanting to get a little more of this life. Well, First Timothy 6:7 says, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." That's something good to remember. You had better get some possessions that can't be rung up on a cash register, because one of these days you're going to have to leave it all behind. God is looking for poor people! We're told in Matthew, in the eleventh chapter, verse five, that the Gospel is preached to the poor. And in the seventh chapter of Luke where the Lord Jesus told the story to Simon, He said there were two debtors. One owed ten times as much as the other, but they were alike in one thing—they had nothing to pay. And that's when the Lord frankly forgave them both. Now that shows us how poor we are. Not all people will admit it. The third chapter of Revelation speaks to us about the people living at Laodicea who said they were rich and increased with goods, but the Lord said they were poor and miserable and blind and naked.

If you and I will admit our poverty, the Lord has some real riches for us. The Lord Jesus, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. When was He rich? Well, He was certainly never rich down here on this earth. The Lord Jesus was rich in glory as the eternal Son of God. He possessed everything. He was rich, but for our sakes He became poor. How poor? Well, to the poverty of the cross, "that we through His poverty might be rich." That's Second Corinthians 8:9. This is what it cost God in order to give us His riches. His Son must give up His life on the cross that our sins might be put away, and we be brought into a place where God could bless us with true riches.

Now the riches that God offers us are the "spiritual blessings in heavenly places" according to Ephesians one, and this is in contrast to Israel's temporal blessings. In the Old Testament a godly Israelite or Jew was blessed with temporal things. But God blesses us with spiritual things. Now don't tell me they are less real. That's the only real estate there is! Something you can take with you. Something that will be yours forever! He calls these "the unsearchable riches of Christ" in Ephesians 3:8. I'd like to mention a few of them. If you have a pencil there you might want to put them down. And if you think over these riches you'll see that these are riches indeed! God's possessions which He offers to give to us.

In Romans 2:4 we read about "the riches of His goodness." We have no goodness of our own, but God offers to share with us the riches of His goodness. God is good to all, and God offers to be good to you. Through the Lord Jesus Christ He can be. And He's not good in a

cheap way, but He's good in a rich way. He gives according to His own riches.

Then in Romans 9:23 we read of "the riches of His glory." All that's His in the glory!

Then we read in the eleventh chapter, verse 33, of His riches of wisdom. Do you ever feel like you wish you knew more than you do? That's a good, healthy feeling. Of a person who thinks he knows something, God says he knows nothing yet as he ought. But James 1:5 tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." It shall be given him because God has riches of wisdom. If you had a really wise friend I'm sure you'd go to that friend often. And yet God offers you all the riches of His wisdom.

Then the book of Ephesians tells a great deal about His riches. It's been called the rich epistle of the riches of Christ. In the first chapter, in verse seven, and again in the seventh verse of the second chapter, we read about the "riches of His grace." Now the grace of God means His kindness that He bestows on unworthy sinners. He does not punish us for our sins—that's mercy. But He does show us kindness in spite of our sins—that's grace. Grace can be paraphrased like this:

G = God's

R = Riches

A = At

C = Christ's

E = Expense

That's grace. "By grace are ye saved." The riches of His grace. There is no sinner too great.

And then in the fourth verse of that second chapter you have the riches of His mercy. So the two are given there together.

Now Philippians 4:19 talks about "His riches in glory." Everything He does for us is according to His riches in glory. Now, if I spent \$10 for a present for someone I'd be doing pretty well. But if a millionaire only spent \$10, you'd think he didn't care much. And God gives according to His station, according to His riches, according to His riches in glory. And it says, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Then in Colossians there are two more: The first chapter, verse 27, tells about "the riches of the glory of this mystery." That is, what God has not told in the past but is now revealed unto us. It's wonderful to know these things. And then "the riches of full assurance" in chapter two and verse two. Let me ask you, Do you have assurance? Are you able to rest on the Word of God and say, "Well, thank God, I know that I am His own." And do you have assurance about His daily care? Or are you constantly worried and distressed? Well, God wants to give you these riches.

James 2:5 speaks of poor people who are "rich in faith." That's the grace of God shown in our lives. That's more than just His grace in saving us. It is God's grace seen in our daily lives.

Well, no wonder He says in Luke 16 that God will give you the true riches. And these are the true riches! God also gives us what we need for this life, but let's never

put that on a par with riches in the spiritual realm. He does promise us that He knows our needs, and that if we “seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness... all these things shall be added” to us; and He does say that God, who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” We can count on the Lord to give us what we need, because He knows what we need; but let’s never think of temporal things as being too important. In fact, in the third epistle of John we are told that those who went out preaching in the first century took nothing from the Gentiles. Now how could they do that? The apostle Paul said he knew how to be hungry. Why didn’t he beg from the unconverted? It’s done today to a great extent. Why didn’t he do it? Well, because he was completely independent of mankind, completely independent of unconverted people. He was dependent upon God! And he believed that God would supply whatever needs he happened to have.

And then there are more of these riches too, because some are still ahead. In the eighth chapter of Romans, verse 17, we’re told that we are “heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” I’ve never been remembered in anyone’s will, but I think it would be real nice. I’m glad God has remembered me in the only “will” that really counts, because I’m a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn’t that wonderful! Think of being a joint-heir with Christ. What is He going to have? Why, all the glory of heaven is His! The highest place is His. He’s going to sit on the throne. He says, as I have overcome and am sat down on my Father’s throne, so those who overcome will sit down with Me on My throne. He says, if we suffer with Him, we’ll also reign with Him. This is the

inheritance Paul refers to in Colossians 1:12. Again, in Peter's epistle in the first chapter, he writes about an inheritance "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

God is not asking you to give up a lot to become a Christian—He is asking you to accept a lot. He is asking you to accept the blessings of God and all of His possessions. When you accept Christ as your Saviour, with Him He freely gives you everything. It's really possible for you to become a rich person, if you are willing to take God's free gift. You can't have it any other way—you cannot earn it! Please don't try to trade God a few good works, etc., for His rich blessings. That's like offering a man a nickle for a million dollars. Any little thing you could offer to God is nothing compared to what He offers to you, and it cost our Saviour so much. He suffered and died on the cross in order that He might bring you into all the riches of God. Why not accept them from Him with thankfulness, and believe Him that they are yours, and begin to enjoy them. Now let's look to Him in a word of prayer. Our Father, we thank Thee in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for giving Thy Son for us. We thank Thee for what He went through in order that He might purchase for us the eternal riches, and now we pray that many who listen will receive our Saviour and through Him all the possessions of God. Take our thanks in His Name. Amen.