**GMT20241031-231147 Recording 640x360(1)**

Hi guys, welcome. This is our Thursday night Bible study class. We are in the book of Ephesians, sort of a segue out of the book of Revelation that we're studying, but we're out looking into the Christian life to ensure ourselves that when we go back to Revelation and we talk about the rapture, we absolutely understand what our spiritual condition is, to understand where in that process we think we are individually.

So we're turning the corner tonight. It's going to get exciting. We're going to look at the duty or the application of all of theology and doctrine that we have learned in chapters one and three.

We're going to take our time with this. So we're going to start in Ephesians 4. As we come to this great section of this letter written by Paul to the churches, really in Asia Minor, one of which was the church at Ephesus, which is how we get to the book of Ephesians. Now we've entitled this whole section, if you will, the lowly walk of our high position.

It's a tremendous passage as we begin to indwell ourselves in this, and we'll be spending a lot of time here, probably I would say four weeks, and just looking at the first six verses. Its import, its impact is so rich for us to understand. We're going to take our time in doing everything we possibly can.

Remember, no stones unturned. So when a person joins a certain organization or a certain society, they obligate themselves to live or act in accord with that standards of that society. We obligate ourselves to function according to the aims, the objectives, the goals, the drives, and the purposes of that society to which we want to attach ourselves.

It can be illustrated in many ways. As an American citizen, a person who chooses to live in the United States of America, we obligate ourselves to abide by the principles, the standards, and the laws that govern that society. As a person who's permitted to work in the place where you work, whatever place that is, a business or a plant, a shop, an office, a school, whatever it is where you work, you work there on the premise that you conform yourself and cooperate with the standards and the goals and the objectives and the principles that are part of that particular organization.

If you choose to join a service club, you obligate yourself to function in reference to that service club in the manner that they prescribe. If you join a secret society, whether it's an elk's club, a moose club, a goat's club, or whatever other things you got going in that arena, whatever you happen to join, you automatically obligate yourself to cooperate with the standards that make up that organization. If you want to become a part of a certain cult, a certain athletic team, a certain assembly line, a certain religious order, a certain business, it really doesn't matter what it is.

There are certain principles that you pledge loyalty to uphold. That's why, that's the whole way the human society is made. From the garden to today, that's the way it's made.

You can go back to the garden and look at what God gave as the principles, rules, and objectives of Adam and Eve when they placed in the garden and told him exactly what's going to happen. He didn't pull any punches. He says, if you do this, this is what's going to happen.

They did it. This is what's going to happen. So it is from the garden to today, the human society is based upon whatever organization you want to join, whatever society membership you want to join, there are standards, rules, objectives that you have to adhere to, or what? You're asked to leave.

And if you choose not to cooperate, and if you fall out of the line of conformity, you will lose your place within the framework of that organization, no matter what it is. If a person fails to become what the society feels is necessary, if he or she fails to fulfill its purpose and aims, it becomes a hindrance. You become a hindrance to that society and are dismissed from it.

You're completely set aside. It could be seen, for example, in our own situation in the government, in this government, if you do not conform to the standards of the government, the laws of the government has set down, you will be taken out of the society and you will be incarcerated where somewhere where you will no longer be able to hinder the ongoing of the function of that society. What's wrong in jail? If you violate any of the laws, it says jail term is your accountability.

If you identify yourself with a certain organization in business, and you fail to live up to that expectation that the organization sets, and you fail to conform to those standards of operation, you'll be fired. And that's the way it is in society. You're called upon to function in accord with that with which you identify.

That's just standard fare. Now, I can tell you that I've had many, many, many lectures from coaches in my past in athletics that have said, look, if you're not going to do it our way, then get off the team. Now that's a pretty standard approach to anything that we align ourselves with.

The old story of marching along with everybody else in the army and keeping in step is part of human society and mentality. Societies which we identify with socially, economically, and politically demand cooperation and conformity if we are to maintain a place within it. Now, this can become so binding on people that it's amazing what they will do to conform.

I'm utterly amazed at how people will become the organization man or the organization woman to fulfill whatever the organization tells you to fulfill. If they think it'll get them a raise or push them up the ladder a little higher. You guys go to extreme to organizationally fit in.

I'm amazed at the loyalty of some people to the various lodges and secret societies and things that they belong to, service clubs, so that they miss something. So if they miss something somewhere, they'll walk across the burning desert on hands and knees 12 hours in a row to get to a meeting to make sure they don't violate the code. Now I want you to think about just what we've just gone over.

Imply that into your life underneath your self-evaluation and you tell yourself what organizational elements you belong to, that that is what you operate to. And then you evaluate for yourself, is that my standard of life? It's amazing how people prescribe themselves into such binding things, but that's part of human society. We love to belong.

We said early on in one of our other studies, every person has to worship. It's what do you worship? You can't live without worshiping something. What is it? Because you must feel the acceptance by belonging to something.

Our whole basis of life is built around the sense of being included. Think about your school. Think about how you went in your childhood.

Think about your high school. Think about everything that you wanted to get involved with. You had to find a way to get involved with it.

You had to find the right angle. You had to write to find the right people. You had to get into the right network.

You had to go to the right school. You had to be in the right society. You had to go eat with these people.

All of this stuff makes you who you are. From the time we are very little, we've identified with something. The majority of us identified with some type of uniform as a standard.

Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, baseball team, Little League soccer team, Little League football. You identified with something typically because you wanted that suit. You wanted something that gave you the ability to stand out from what you thought was the average day society.

If I just got on that team, if I just got in that clique, if I just did this, my life would completely change. And you still do it today. We want to be part of a team because we want to wear the uniform.

I'm not talking about clothing. I'm talking about what you wear in society to identify yourself with, whatever that might be. Everybody wants to be part of a team.

That's just part of the human desire to belong, to gain some acceptance and a sense of identity. And it's amazing how binding it becomes. It can actually trap people in a very bad way.

Girls, teenagers, oh God, I want to date this guy. I just want to date that guy. Doesn't matter what that guy's doing.

I just want to date that guy. When you date the guy, then you get labeled. Without doing a thing, you just got labeled and you then learn later in the years, why in the world did I ever do that? Because that label has stayed with me for so many years.

And guys, oh my gosh, I want to date all these girls. Because I want to have notches on my belt. I want to date all of these girls.

Think about it. And oh, by the way, those notches become locker room chit-chat. It's amazing how we do things just to try to conform to something that is so unimpressive to life and stays with us for the entire life process.

Now, let me give you an illustration of this. And I'm going to have you turn to the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John. You're well known of this story, but we're going to go through it because there's details in the story that you have not picked up on.

I guarantee you have not picked up on. The Lord Jesus Christ had done a wonderful miracle in the ninth chapter of John. He had healed a man who was born blind.

Remember this? The blind man came to Jesus. He did a spittle in his hand, took some earth and mixed it with it. And he put it on his eyes and said, now go wash your eyes in the River Shalom, the Pool of Shalom.

And he did it and he came back seeing and it was a wonderful miracle. But that's not the story that you need to get. And then, of course, the leaders, remember the leaders began to try to investigate this because why he did it on the Sabbath day, which was against what? Jewish tradition.

It's pretty sad when unbelief investigates a miracle, is it not? Oh, think about your societies that you're a part of. You got one foot in the church and one foot in these societies and these societies are going to try to invest the church. And you're hanging on the fence.

You never get the right results. And they were very antagonistic to what Jesus had done. And, of course, they first of all wanted to talk to whom? The blind man's parents to find out what they knew that was going on.

This is the story that you haven't been taught. Are you so glossed over, you don't realize it is exactly what's going on today. We come to verse 22.

These words spoke for his parents because they feared the Jews. Oh, a clique, a group, your society, whatever it is, they feared the Jews. What had they said? Verse 21.

We don't want to answer for him. He is of age. Ask him and he'll speak for himself.

In other words, they wouldn't acknowledge anything about how he was healed. They wouldn't discuss how he was healed. They wouldn't give credit to Jesus Christ.

They wouldn't give him give glory to God. They didn't want to get involved in it at all. And the reason is here.

They feared the Jews for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Oh, my gosh, I'm now going to get a put out of my political correctness of being in this social society because I'm speaking out the truth. They were so strictured by the desire for acceptance in the society they had chosen that they would not confess that the sight of their own beloved son had come at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ for fear they would lose their social status.

Parents of children, you taught your children just that. How many times do you tell them you need to be in this club? You need to be doing this thing because that is what's going to get you ahead. Now, that's a pretty binding thing, isn't it? They would not confess the reality of the miracle of their own blind son because they feared that they would get what the Greek says unsynagogue, excommunicated.

And the thing that mattered most to them was not the truth, but it was belonging to the society which they had decided to identify with. I want you to think about this because you've already been raised to a higher standard. You've been taught the truth in a lot of ways, and people can identify with things that become so binding to them that they literally become blind to the reality of what they ought to know and ought to be part of.

Scripture says, do not love anything of this world, do not love this world or anything of it, but that's exactly how we live our lives. I could probably ask a number of questions in all hands or go up just to prove my point. Had they been thinking, they would have immediately wished to identify with the son and with the one who had made the blind to see for there was the real power.

What Christ said, you identify with me and I will identify with you of my heavenly father. If you do not identify with me, I will not identify with you to my heavenly father. You select your societies, your joints, your whatever over the truth.

You've just destined yourself to what? To not being identified by Christ to your father. You are completely separated. Just by your decision of who you want to join yourself with.

Over in the 12th chapter, John, and hang on just a minute. Hey, baby. Yeah, come here.

Come here. Yeah. Look at this one.

Yeah. Say hi. I see misty in her.

Hi there. Hi, baby. Love you.

All right. Back to business. I had to do that.

She's so cute. Oh, my gosh. All right.

So going over to the 12th chapter of John, let's continue this. And the 42nd verse, we find a similar occasion, John 12, 42. And of course, the Lord had come and fulfilled prophecy and all of this.

And it says in verse 42, nevertheless, among the chief rulers, also many believed on him. But. And that's a tragic but.

Because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than what? The praise of God. The same thing happened again. They had made such a firm commitment to the society that they had chosen that there was no way that they were going to restrict the function they wanted within society.

They actually damned their own souls to adhere to the code. That's incredible. But that's how it is with man's willingness to conform to the standards of the group to which he makes his allegiance and form which he gains a sense of identity.

That's the negative to all of this. Now, I can look back in my youth. And see myself belonging to a lot of things.

I started fraternities and I got got out of it just about as fast as I got in. Number one, the initiations, I would not do. Just would not conform to.

So I got out pretty darn quick. So when you look back and you say, why would I even bother with that kind of thing? But the drive and the heart of a man is very strong. And of a woman to belong to be part of something.

And in a world, it amazes me that when people identify, they lock in and they'll do anything to conform. I want you to think about that. Especially the young people, the children who don't have access to strong homes.

They're going to do anything to get into something that's going to give them the assurance that they belong. And it really doesn't matter what it is. They want to abide by the principles.

They want to be what they need to be. They want to get that acceptance. And you know what happens? When you translate that into the church, something goes very, very wrong.

You get tons of people who come and a lot of people who want the blessing and the rights and the privileges and the honors, but somewhere along the line, they never make the commitment to conform to the standards. Oh, here's your ticket. You're not going to like what's going to happen.

It doesn't seem to be nearly as binding the church. And maybe it's because in all the world things, Satan is in there holding it together. He's present in your life.

He's present all around you. And maybe it's because in all the world things, Satan is there. But in the church, he's there trying to rip it apart.

Remember, he wasn't successful in corrupting the bloodline of Christ. So therefore, the only way he's going to get to God is corrupt the church. And that becomes a tough thing to stick with, the church.

But you know, the standard isn't any different. And when you come to Jesus Christ, you enter his church, the body, you receive his salvation, and he gives you all the rights and honors and privileges that come with being a Christian. And then he says, I want you to conform to my standards.

We've seen that, right? And the New Testament says, if there's anybody in your midst that doesn't conform to these standards, put them out. If there's somebody in your midst, 1 Corinthians 5, who's living in an immoral manner in your midst, put them out. If there's somebody in 2 Thessalonians, who's walking disorderly, who is doing what they ought not to do, and they don't respond to you by coming to repentance, what does he say? Put them out.

If there's somebody, Paul said to Timothy, who's teaching things that are not consistent with what we know to be the truth of God, put them out. God has it that way in his church, just like in any other society or organization you belong to. He says, if you're not going to conform and cooperate with what the church is doing, then you're better off to be out.

In fact, sometimes the Lord puts people out on his own. He says, enough's enough. And he said to the Corinthians, think about being put out various ways, because of the way you have acted within the church, some of you are weak, some of you are sick, and some of you are dead.

And in 1 John chapter 5, he says, there is even a sin unto death, where the Lord literally excommunicates a believer, not losing salvation, we've already talked about once saved, always saved, but being put out of the church fellowship, because they are more of a hindrance than a help. You have your ticket, you're not going to like what's going to happen. If people can join athletic teams, and businesses, and the royal order of the goats, or the geese, or the elks, or whatever, and anything else, and conform with such rigid conformity, if people can be so fearful of being unsynagogued by the Jewish superstructure of their day, that they literally damned their own souls, and blinded their eyes to the reality of the Son of God.

If people can make those kinds of commitments to things that don't matter, do you imagine that we as Christians can make a high level kind of commitment to walk in the fashion that God has asked us to walk within the framework of his own beloved church? Now, if we're going to be members of the church, I think we should do that, right? If you're going to confess to be a Christian, if you're going to confess to be a follower of Jesus Christ, don't you think you should observe his standards? I think that's what Paul is calling us to do in the last three chapters of Ephesians, which you're going to have a lot of self-evaluation as we go through this. He starts out on verse one by saying this, and here's the heart of the matter. I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called.

In other words, you have in the first three chapters the rights, and the honors, and the privileges, and now in the last three chapters, he says, here are the requirements. If you want those, here's the requirements. If you want to be a meaningful part of God's church, if you want to be somebody that matters in his church, if you want to adorn the doctrine of God, if you want to advance the kingdom, if you really believe in this, then here are the standards by which you shall walk.

When you and I entered the church of Jesus Christ, when we entered the body of Christ, when by faith one day I put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he became my Savior and Lord, in that day I became part of his kingdom. I became part of his household. I became part of his family.

I became one of the branches that extends from the branch, the Lord Jesus Christ. I became part of him. It behooves me to live up to it.

He gave me the rights, and he gave me the privileges, and the honors. He made me unsearchably rich. He gave me, not out of his riches, but according to his riches.

He blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ Jesus. He has set aside the future for my benefit, and in the ages to come, he will pour out his grace and his kindness towards us who believe. He has done all of this for me and you, and now in chapter four, there's a therefore here, and I have to turn the corner and say, on the basis of this kind of promise to me, what are you asking of me? The apostle Paul comes through ringingly loud and clear.

Walk worthy of such a calling. This is who you are. Walk in accord with that.

Live up to that standard. The Lord expects us to act like members of his body. He expects us to aim at what he aims at.

He expects us to set the goal where he has set the goal, and to have the objective that is his objective. He expects us to be what? Like him. We are to be like Christ.

You're to put on the body of Christ. 1 Peter 2 15, Peter says that the will of God is at me, and with well-doing would put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. In other words, we are to silence the mouth of the critics by the way we live, not what we say, and I guess that's why I say this often.

It's so sad that most Christians don't walk worthy of their calling. Now, there's a lot of theologians out there that I relate to, but there's one that comes to mind, and it's Dr. Ralph Culper, and he said the whole Christian life is simply becoming what you are. That which you see in the mirror is who you are.

It's simply becoming what you are. This is who you are, and this is how you are to live, living up to who you are. In the body of Christ, God expects conformity.

Not a conformity to the rules and regulations out of fear. We didn't say fear. There's 365 verses that says do not fear.

Not a conformity to the rules and regulations out of a legalistic pride, but a conformity to the righteousness of a deep love and affections for Jesus Christ. But nonetheless, conformity. I want to do what God wants me to do.

I want to be what God wants me to be because of what all that he has done for me, which we just studied for many, many weeks in chapters one through three. Before you were born, before the foundation of the world, matter of fact, I want to be worthy son or a worthy child. A believer calls himself a child of God.

That's what he says. We're adopted to his family, so we're a child of God. A believer who's joined God's family belongs to the heavenly father, and that says something about how we ought to live, don't you think? If I'm my father's child, then I'll honor my father.

That's what Scripture says, right? Honor your father and mother. That's what is going on. And it said failure in our commitment.

It is indeed not to live up to such an identity. Now in Philippians 127, Paul puts it this way. Only let, now listen to this, only let your conduct be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.

Oh, wow. You see, in other words, match your conduct with the gospel. The exalted reality of the gospel demands an exalted lifestyle, and that is precisely the issue we've come to in Ephesians 4. The first three chapters are positional truth, the resources, the riches, the things God has done for us.

We've been through them all. Obviously staggering and incredible things that we learned. We found that he blessed us with all of the spiritual blessings.

He chose us in him before the foundation of the world. He made us to be holy, to be blameless. In love, he even predestined us.

He chose us. He adopted us. He made us to praise of, to the praise of his glory.

He made us accepted in the beloved one, Jesus Christ. He has given us redemption, forgiveness. He's given us wisdom and prudence.

He's made us known to us the mystery of his will. Oh, that's awesome. He has in the dispensation yet in the future to lift us up to the heights we haven't even dreamed of, to give us an inheritance that was pre-planned for what the world ever began.

He has granted us the Holy Spirit. He's given us resurrection power. He's made us alive from the dead.

He's taken us who are far off, who were lost, who were cut off, and he's made us one new man in himself. He's given us the great mystery of the truth of the gospel, the truth of the church. He's made it possible for us to capitalize on all this by giving us his Holy Spirit who can strengthen the inner man so that Christ can settle down and be at home, so that we can be filled with the incomprehensible love, so that we can have eternal fullness, the fullness of God, so that we can know the power that's in verse 20.

And he's done it all for his glory. He's done everything for us. And simply, pointedly, directly, does Paul say, walk worthy, live up to it.

It's high time that we circumscribe our living to our identity. It's time of a great new testament of truth in our life. Now, the transition begins between three and four is not a random one.

It's on purpose. It is the typical pattern of Paul to make this kind of transition. It is a transition from doctrine to duty, from doctrine to duty, from precept or principle to practice, from theology to life.

It is not a random transition. He doesn't say, well, that's all for that, the first three chapters. Now, I think I've got something else I want to say.

No, he didn't do that. It's a transition that is inseparably linked to the first three chapters. Doctrine always is the basis of duty.

Duty always flows out of doctrine. There can be no living unless there are principles for it. You're going to randomly just walk through life without having any degree of understanding what you should be doing? No.

There can be no lifestyle unless there is a theology at the bottom of it. There can be no practice if there's no precepts. Doctrine and duty are linked as closely as flower and stem.

Flower what? As close as flower and stem. As closely as the branch and the trunk. As closely as the trunk and the roots.

Doctrine and duty. Notice the word in verse one, therefore. We know what that therefore is, therefore, to take us back into scripture.

It's the transition. On the basis of all of this doctrine, therefore, this is your duty. That's always Paul's approach.

In all of his letters, guys, as you study the scripture, the New Testament, and all of Paul's writings, in all of his letters, he does this. In all of the letters there that he wrote to the churches, you'll find these therefores. You will open the book with doctrine and you'll get to the point that says, okay, I've shown you all the doctrine, therefore, this is what you got to do.

Every one of these letters is that way. In fact, if you want an interesting study, sometimes just go through Paul's epistles and study all the transitions where therefore appears. You'll find amazing study about your life.

Let's go back to an illustration in Romans chapter 12. Romans chapter 12. Now, we're all familiar with this great text.

You're going to know it as we get through it. It's one that we know and love. This is what it says.

I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. You've heard that many, many, many, many times. Oh, but now let's look at it differently.

Now, I want you to notice something. He is beseeching people. He's calling them out.

And he is beseeching them to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. This is duty. This is your duty he's asking for.

He wants duty of the Romans. In fact, in verse three, he talks about the gifts that were to manifest. Down in verse nine, he talks about the love that they're to manifest.

And then further on, and they are to be not lazy in verse 11. They're to be rejoiceful in verse 12. They're to give to the media in verse 13.

They're to bless their prosecutors in verse 14. Rejoice with people who rejoice and weep with those who weep to show sympathy, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. All of these are practical things.

Then in verse 13, he talks about how you to respond to the government. How do you respond to God's standards? How do you respond to the weaker brother in chapter 14? Now, here you're to respond to the weaker brother in chapter 15. You're to carry out your ministry in chapter 15.

Chapter 16, how do you relate to the ministry? It's all practical. It's all practical. But notice this, before he gets into this practical section, he says, therefore, listen to me.

In chapter 12, you have the first practical instruction about the Romans. The first 11 chapters are theological. They're doctrinal.

Before he ever says anything about what you're doing, he gives you 11 chapters of doctrine, the principles of God. He does this in every one of his books, and he's our apostle, and we don't even understand it. Before he ever says anything about what you do, he gives you 11 chapters of doctrine.

Notice what he says. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, on the basis of the mercies of God. And what are these mercies of God? They're the great theological truths that he has recited in the first 11 chapters of the book of Romans.

On the basis of these great realities about God, which mercifully have been extended to you, this is your duty. On the basis of all righteousness to God, the usefulness of laws and works, the love, the indwelling spirit, adoption, reconciliation, union, slavery to Christ, deliverance from sin, freedom from judgment, sanctification, justification, glorification, security, unfailing promises on the basis of all these great mercies of God dispensed to sinful man. Therefore, brethren, I beseech you to present your bodies.

It's always like that. Duty is always a response to doctrines. Behavior is always a response to precepts.

Life is always a response to theology. And I want you to know this, because I want you to know why I teach so much doctrine. I have to do it.

That's what God has called me to do. I am a watchman to tell you the truth. How in the world can I tell you the truth about your duty if I don't teach you what the precepts are, or the theology, or the doctrine? You can't teach it.

Don't take this wrong, as I'm an elder person too. You can't teach a child how to walk without teaching them what's the purpose and how they can do it. You can't teach them how to ride a bike unless you teach them what's going to happen, how it works.

So I will always, and I'll spend a lot of time, we're going to spend a lot more time, because if you don't understand doctrine, you don't understand how to live your life. The therefore is there for a reason. Look at Galatians chapter 5, and I'll give you another illustration.

And we could go on to any of Paul's epistles to do that, but I'm going to, I've picked a couple here. Galatians, in the first four chapters of Galatians, Paul is discussing the liberty of the believer. He is free from circumcision.

He is free from the Mosaic code as a way of salvation. He is free from the ceremonial law. It doesn't mean that God's righteous moral law has changed at all, but he's not to look at the law as a way of salvation.

He's free from that. He's free from circumcision. He's free from having to keep ceremonies.

And he said all this, that we have freedom in Christ. That's all the first four chapters, heavy on that. In fact, he closes out chapter four, so then brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

He gives us that great allegory of Sarah and Hagar, and then he closes with a great statement, we are free. Great thing, liberated for life, free. And then immediately, his therefore comes.

In verse one, and I'll read it to you the way the Greek renders it, for freedom Christ has set us free. That's the summary of the first four chapters in one verse, for freedom Christ has set us free. Now, when you see the therefore, it's based on the theology of freedom.

Therefore, don't go back to legalism. You're free. Why do you want to go back to be slaves? And then in chapters five and six, he discusses the practical aspect of life of freedom.

Now look at Philippians chapter two, verse one, and don't worry about anything because we're going to get through all of this, but this is just going to be a foundation tonight. Philippians chapter two, verse one, if there be therefore, that's that therefore again, he's given some great, great theological truths in the first chapter. Great realities about Christ and what he's done in his life about Christ's consolation, about Christ's love, all these things.

And now he says, if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the spirit, any tender mercies and compassions, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind, saying, guys, if you just get what he gave to you, you can have it yourself. And it's free. It's free.

You don't have to do anything about it. In other words, he says, look, if our theology is then beloved, our behavior has got to be this. We've got to have a therefore based upon theology and doctrine to live by.

Look at Colossians chapter three, verse five. The first two chapters of Colossians, one of the most exalted presentation of Jesus Christ and the truth of the gospel anywhere in the Bible. Fabulous statements.

The end of chapter one is absolutely unparalleled as a statement of the glory of Christ. The only one that can rival it is it probably in Hebrews chapter one. Tremendous statement about Christ.

And then he goes on to the into the great truth of how Christ is all in all in chapter two. And you don't need anything but Christ. Christ is everything.

Tremendous. And then at the beginning of chapter three, he says, look, you are risen with this Christ. What a great doctrine is this.

You're risen in with Christ. You were seated at the right hand of God. When Christ shall appear, you're going to appear with him in glory.

Do you realize you've been exalted to the heavenlies before you were born? You have been given a citizenship that is trans earthly, that is up there in the heaven of God, the heavenlies, as Paul calls them. Do you realize you have ascended beyond, beyond, beyond? Your life is hid with Christ in God. There's nothing that can happen to you.

And then he says in verse five, kill therefore, kill therefore your members, which are on earth. I want you to see this point clear through chapter three, verse four, it's doctrine, doctrine, doctrine. Finally, there's a therefore, which means here's your duty.

Now, beloved, you need to know this. This is a constant principle of the New Testament. It's everywhere.

Basic to teaching principles for living. We are to walk worthy of our calling. We know what he's done for us.

We know who we are. We know the principles. We are to walk worthy of those.

First Thessalonians chapter four, verse one says this, furthermore, then we beseech you, brethren, to exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us, how you ought to walk to please God, so you would abound more and more. Now, do you get the point yet? We have taught you how to walk. And oh, I exhort you now to do it.

You see, first there has to be the teaching. You can't expect the believer to function on what he doesn't know. So that's what we're learning.

You can't live a principle you don't know. You can't behave in a way you don't understand. You must search the word of God to know the principles.

Priors tells us that we'll know the wisdom of God when you desire that wisdom like you desire gold. Talk about your own secret societies. Talk about your organizations you belong to.

Talk about what you do and give all of your time and effort and money and whatnot to these stupidly worldly organizations. And then when it comes to God, you give crumbs. When you search to know God's wisdom, you'll know it.

The 28th chapter of Job, I was just reading this yesterday. It describes, the first part of the chapter describes how men will work to mine out treasures. And it talks about the fact that they will go to any length conceivable to get the treasure out of the ground.

In fact, let me show it to you. Look at Job chapter 28. He says here, surely there is a vein for the silver and a place for gold where they refine it.

Iron is taking out of the earth and bronze is smelting out of the stone. He setteth it into darkness and searches out all perfection, the stones of darkness and the shadow and the shadow of death. What Job is saying here is incredible that a man will literally go down into the pits to find treasures, to find gold.

He'll uncover the stones of darkness. He'll go into the shadows of death. He searches out everything to find silver, to find iron, to find bronze.

He talks about it. Verse six, the stones are in the places of sapphires and it has dust of gold. And there is a path which no fowl knows, which no bird knows, for which the falcon eyes have never seen, and the iron squelch have never tried, nor the fierce lion pass by.

In other words, this stuff, you know, materialism, this stuff, these sapphires and diamonds and rubies and gold and silver are hidden in places that the animals don't know and the birds don't know, in dark places and deep places. And man will go there to find them. And he puts forth his hand, verse nine, on the rocks and overturns the mountains by the roots.

He cuts the rivers among the rocks and his eye sees every precious thing. He binds the floods from overflowing. He sets up a dam and then he pans for gold.

Man will do anything to get treasures, Job says. And Job says that's when it's all said and done. You know what he never finds? He never finds the wisdom of God.

And then when you come to Proverbs chapter two, you hear the writer of Proverbs say this, when you put as much effort to know the wisdom of God as man will do to find gold and silver, then you'll know God's wisdom. And listen, until you know God's wisdom, until you know the basis of doctrine is there, you don't know how to live. You have to know God's wisdom to know how to live.

Back to Colossians for a moment. Verse one, chapter one, verse nine. For this cause we also, since the day we've heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will.

Now listen, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, Paul says, oh, I want you to be filled with the knowledge of his will. That's in your mind. All wisdom, all understanding, the results in verse 10, in order that ye may walk.

What's the next word? Worthy. You cannot walk worthy unless you understand the knowledge and wisdom of God's word. You see, again, the worthy walk is predicted on knowledge.

Being fruitful in every good work, predicated on knowledge, strengthened with might, predicated on knowledge, giving thanks, predicated on knowledge. That's why we teach the word of God. That's why week after week after week, we get together and teach principles of the word of God.

I don't spend a lot of time telling you stories. I don't spend a lot of time just to whip you up in your emotional frenzies. I just want to teach you the principles of the word of God so that you can live them out.

Now, we could do that. We could have sanctified pep talks. And I could come up and pull out of some of my oldies and goodies, and we could tell you some jokes that I know were very few.

And we could laugh and scratch the whole time. And we could get all traumatized emotionally. And I could tell you tear-jerking stories.

And we could just really have a real emotional bath. And you know what? You'd get all emotionalized. And then within 15 minutes later, you'd forget everything you heard.

That wouldn't be any principles there, would there? No. Pastors and teachers weaken the word of God when they come to people and exhort them about duty, and they've never taught them about doctrine because they suck the motive out of it. They've removed the principle.

Let me illustrate it. Let's say this. I'm going to assume that we all drive at 55 miles an hour.

So I'm going to assume that, okay, for the purpose of this. Why do you drive 55 miles an hour? The reason you drive 55 miles an hour is because there's a doctrine. And that doctrine says you will drive 55 miles an hour.

If you don't, there's consequences. Your duty is predicated on that doctrine. Oh, here's another one.

Around the 1st of April, do you look to your wife and say, honey, wouldn't it be such a great thing to do to send a very large check to this government? They've done so much for us. They've given us playgrounds. They've given us parks.

They've given us roads that we go on on our vacations. They've done all of these great things, wonderful programs to help the needy. This government is so great.

So let's just send several thousand dollars to them. And in fact, let's go borrow for it. Let's go borrow and do it.

Let's just go hawk everything we got and send it to our government because I just feel there's something in me that wants to do this. That's not the reason, guys. The reason that you send, the reason that you follow road signs is because there's a doctrine that says you're going to do it or there's consequences.

That's one of the rules and that's the way it is in Christian life. You don't arbitrarily do things. And unless people know the reason, you have a hard time getting them to make a commitment to the duty.

I hope you understand. And so what happens is you can become a sort of a theological, but sort of a Christian cheerleader, you know, doing the right thing. Let's go just do the right thing, whatever that might be, and get everybody in there and get them all committed to doing stuff.

And they haven't got the faintest idea why, unless you teach them the doctrine. That's the reason why you guys have start and stop programs all the time and various things is because nobody teaches them what it's for. Why are you doing it? The Lord does a lot of things and he gives us the ability, the teachers, to teach.

But the first thing that we have to do in to get a following to listen is to get you to come listen and then convince you that you ought to operate on those things. That's what God has called me to do. And I'm not interested in getting you to conform legalistically.

I'm not interested in getting you to conform emotionally. I'm not interested in intuiting you into that. I feel that my responsibility is to give you the truth of the Word of God and to allow you the responsibility to obey it or not.

And I think we just get a lot in the pulpit today, the whipping up of people into emotionalism, and we just tell them to do things all the time without giving them a theological reason for doing it. We leave them empty and we miss the point. Doctrine is the key to Christian living.

People today say, well, we just want to love everybody and we don't want to make doctrine an issue. Oh, this unconditional love. We just need to love everybody and everything will be okay.

That is the most dumbest statement I've ever heard in my life. You know, in fact, there are churches that have now started up called city churches. The one that comes to mind is in LA.

It's on Roskell Boulevard about Haskell, and there's a little green church with no sign on it. That is a church in LA. By that, they called it that because years ago, Watchman Nee wrote that each, according to the New Testament, every city had one church.

So that should be still true. And a guy named Witness Lee picked up on this and started a movement out of it, and they say that there will be only one church in each city. The Church of Los Angeles, the Church of San Francisco, the Church of Dallas, the Church of Houston.

That's what it is. I don't know how all of that works, but from a theological point, because they're all now related. Okay, and they started this church because they didn't want any theology.

They didn't want any doctrine. But I don't know how that works with their theology, but that's what it is. It's called the Church of Your City.

Well, that book spawned this movement. It's written by a man by the name of William Witness Lee, and the title of the book is Christ versus Doctrine. That's the title of the book.

I've read the book. And in it, he says Christ is against all doctrine. They did not believe in doctrine.

And that, of course, is one of their cardinal doctrines, that they don't believe in doctrine. The word doctrine simply means principles. One of their principles is not to believe in principles.

That's the basis of the church. You can't say, and then you have everyone today who comes on the borderline of liberalism and saying, we've got to forget theology and just set it aside and just have people to love everybody. And let's not talk about theology.

Let's not talk about doctrine. We'll just get all together on the basis of love. Isn't that a wonderful thing? Sure it is, but it's not biblical.

Let me show you some verses. And it's not God's love. No, it's not.

That you were talking about the other night, that deep. Right. Ephesians 4.23. And we're going to get into this a lot more.

There's a way called church renewal. We've talked about that awakening, all of this stuff that's going on. And there's a lot of books coming out on church renewal.

Some of them are good and helpful, and I've appreciated them very much, the ones that I read. But in all of the talk about the church renewal, it's kind of interesting because there's a lot of suggestions about how to get the church renewed. We've got to renew the church.

Renewal is sort of a new word, and there are suggestions. The way you renew a church is to change the structure. We just went through the structure on Monday night.

Can't do that. That's what God tells you, the structure ought to be. We've got to kick against the traces.

We've got to get rid of the old patterns, dump this, get rid of that. We've got to do it in small groups. We've got to do, have little groups of interaction and sharing.

We've got to have it oriented this way. We've got to do it this way. We've got to rearrange the furniture and make people face each other.

We've got to get people to spill out of their problems to each other. And we've got methods and manners and solutions to all of this. None of that's biblical.

And a lot of it's very kind exterior and superficial. And some of it is deep and meaningful, but there's also suggestions of a new mythology for renewal. There's no methods for it, new ways to do it.

You know something? You can do this to your purple. You can reorganize the church every six months for the rest of your life and never know renewal. You get hung up in what can be the socialistic or physical change without looking at the spiritual side of what you're trying to accomplish.

That's your life, guys. You can reorganize, you can restructure. Oh, you can set New Year's resolutions too.

And you can reset and change the format and the methods and the plans and the programs till you die and never gain renewal. Because Ephesians 4.23 says this, you renewed in the spirit of your what? Your mind. If the church really wants renewal, it'll find renewal when it imparts to the people of God, the truth of God, so that their minds can know it.

That's the basis of renewal. And then it matters little how you arrange the furniture or what method you choose to use. Because you've got a whole lot of renewed people and renewed people are going to carry on the work of the Lord in whatever framework that society puts forth.

But notice it is the mind that is the source of renewal. The renewal that comes to the church comes in the mind. The thinking process.

That's why in Ephesians 1.17, the apostle said that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the Lord, would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened. In other words, God knows that the heart of the matter is to know his truth in your mind.

We must know doctrine before we can ever know do. Philippians again, chapter one, verse nine, I just want you to make this point solid in your mind. And here's a verse that I hear a lot, but a lot of times people don't quote the whole verse.

And this, I pray that you love may abound yet more and more. And they stop right there. They say, oh yes, we must love more and more.

We've got to forget about all of those things about doctrine, but you don't read the verse. You only create a verse based upon your objective. Here's what the verse says.

I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment that you may test things that are excellent. See, you've got to be discerning. You've got to make judgments.

You've got to know doctrine and theology or your love is less than God's love, which is discerning, knowledgeable, makes judgment exactly what Billy Ray said. In Colossians chapter one, verse 10, he says that you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work. That's the goal.

How do you do this? Increasing by the knowledge of God. The best rendering of the preposition by the knowledge of God, as you know God, you walk worthy. As you know God, you're fruitful in every good work.

Colossians 3.10, put on the new man that is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him to know God, to know Christ, to know his word. That's the issue. Peter says at the end of his second epistle, chapter three, verse 18, growing grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Knowledge, people, it's knowledge. You've got to know the word of God. You should be hungry for it.

You should search for it. You should seek for it as treasure, the way men go to the pits of the earth to seek gold and silver. Paul wanted people to be perfect, mature, complete.

Colossians 1.27, he says Christ whom we preach, warning every man, teaching every man that we may present every man what? Perfect. We must be mature saints. You might say, oh well, that's great.

That's great. Chapter four, verse 12 in Ephesians, Ephesus is praying that everybody would be perfect and complete in all the will of God. They wanted mature, perfect, complete people.

And of course, the answer came in 2 Timothy chapter three, verse 16. All scripture is given by the inspiration of God that the man of God be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. You can't do the good works without the knowledge of the word of God.

And so we teach you principles. We teach principles. I think one of the reasons Christianity was in so much trouble is kind of coming out of it now.

And I thank God for the revival and the study that's going on. We are coming out of it slowly but surely. But years back, a matter of fact, just a few years back, the reason Christianity was in such trouble straits was because it was so ignorant.

Walter Martin stated one time that the average 90-day wonder out of Jehovah's Witness could take apart a seminary graduate in 30 minutes because he didn't know his theology. They're teaching their kids in school nothingness. People, you can't live what you don't know.

You can't play the game if you don't know the rules. You can't live within the framework of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and walk worthy of it unless you know the standards. You must know the word of God.

Paul said, and he knew so much, yet the great cry in his heart was, oh, that I may know, remember that in Philippians 3, and James' great cry was that I may receive the engrafted word in James 121. And Peter says that we might desire the pure milk of the word, that we might grow thereby. And so it is that the standard of God is the basis of our behavior.

Now, go back to Ephesians 4. I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation to which you are called. This is God's calling by his Holy Spirit for you to walk worthy. And I want you to get that.

Your first mission in life is to walk worthy. Now, let me say this, and we're going to close and open it up for questions. Do you know what happens when you walk worthy? Look at Hebrews chapter 11.

You remember the great heroes of faith in Hebrews chapter 11? So, so wonderful. There was first Abel in verse 4 who offered to God a more excellent sacrifice, and then there was Enoch, why he walked so worthy. One day he took a walk with God, and God liked him so much, and their fellowship was so sweet.

He just kept walking and walking, and the two of them walked right up to glory, and he never died. And then there was Noah, and Noah walked with God for 120 years while he built the boat. And then there was Abraham, and Abraham and Sarah, they walked with God, and they walked a worthy walk, a walk of faith.

Then there was Isaac, and then there was Jacob, and then there was Joseph, and then there was Moses, against all the opposition, against all the system, they walked with God, and theirs was a worthy walk. They lived up to what they knew. And then there was Rahab, the harlot, in verse 31.

And then there was a lot more. Look at verse 32. What will I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah, and David, and Samuel, and all the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and attained promises, and stopped the mouths of wine.

Hey, wouldn't you like to be part of that group? Isn't that a great group to align with? Who quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of the weakness were made strong, became violent in fight, turned to fight the enemies of the aliens. Women received their dead, raised to life again, and others were tortured and accepted deliverance, and they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of filth, mocking, and scourging.

Yea, moreover, of binds, and imprisonment. And they were stoned, and they were sewn in half, sewn, you know, like sewed in half. And they were tested, and they were slain with a sword, and they wondered about in sheepskin and goatskin, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented.

What a group of people. But they still walked with God. But look at the next line in verse 38.

Of whom the world was not what? Worthy. Listen, you walk worthy, and the world won't even be worthy of you. I want to repeat that.

You walk worthy, and the world won't even pay attention to you. They're not worthy of you. Let's pray.

Father, we come with a great deal of conviction in our hearts to you, because we know that we need to be worthy of everything you've given us. We need to be worthy of your spirit. We need to be worthy of praise, your glory.

We need to be constant in tune with what you have provided to us. And as we have turned this corner, to understand your theology, your doctrine, your principles, your rules, your laws, and so forth. And we begin to apply it in our lives.

We ask you to continue to open our minds to the uncovering of the revelation of your truth. And may we apply it to our lives to seek out that which you have requested us to do. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus.