

1Tim 24-01-14b

We're ready now to pick up our study. We have looked at these characteristics, these qualities of character, you might say, and recognizing that they are emblematic. They are exemplary things that we should all cultivate in ourselves and measure ourselves by.

The cockpit of an aircraft has got all kinds of dials and indicators reflecting information from sensors, airspeed, artificial horizon, all, you know, how much fuel, really important things. Our cars, more modern cars, I recently got a much more recent automobile than I've ever had. And the amount of information is almost overwhelming, but it's helpful.

It'll tell you how much air is in your tires and what is the temperature of your oil and what is the temperature at the intake. And there's all kinds of things you can find out. And the reason they measure and present this information, it is collected first and foremost so that the computer that controls your car or your aircraft can mix the fuel and control intake and other aspects of the engine for optimum performance to get the most fuel efficiency, to be safe, to not overheat, to not end up with a cracked block or a burned valve or to, you know, come apart at the seams.

And so these characteristics are manifold. There's a lot of them. And rather than looking at it as a laundry list or something to be skimmed through rapidly, think about this.

If you're about to take a long trip in a car, don't you go around and check each of your four tires and your spare to be sure that they're in good shape. You've got sufficient tread. They've got proper air pressure.

Check your oil. Is the oil fresh? I've had an oil change recently. Check your transmission fluid.

How's that looking? I don't want to shift into second gear when I'm going 80 miles an hour down the interstate. Is the glass clean? Are my headlights and tail lights and indicator lights all operational? There's, you think about anybody that's been around aircraft, I was telling, so I tuned for two helicopter pilots in a row on Thursday and Friday this past week. One had been an Army pilot for 33 years, and it just got out a few years ago, but he flew an aircraft CH-47, and I am acquainted with CH-46 pilot and similar aircraft, but the Army version, and then switched over to fixed wing and so on.

But anybody that knows anything, and I was also, people in our church know that we have pilots and aircraft knowledgeable individuals, and before you fly, there is an extensive pre-flight check. You can't just pull over to the side of the road with a flat when you're in an aircraft. That thing had better work from the time you roll out onto the runway until the time you roll back off your destination runway.

You don't want anything to go wrong. So there's extensive pre-flight checks. Think of

these lists as the pre-flight check and the ongoing health and safety indicators for spiritual life.

Any one of these that goes red, any one of these that is inadequate or insufficient or is a problem area needs to be addressed. You can't be in the air and say, well, you know, this is a big B-52. I've got four great big honking engines.

So if one of them goes out, no big deal. Can you still fly on three engines or on two? Or in some cases in World War II, they would come limping back on one engine and that one was smoking. Yes, you can survive, but is that really the way, do you wanna take off on one or two engines? Do you want to try to operate that way in anything other than desperation? You don't.

So every single one of these characteristics and qualities that we are looking at, if any one of them is a problem in our life, that's an alarm bell that needs to be fixed. It's not like, well, but I've got these others, so it's okay. It's not, that's why they are all given to us.

That's why in order to do a good work and to fulfill the desire to do a good work, we need to be the overseer of our own soul, of our own lives, of our own operation. We are captain of our ship. We are master of our fate.

God has given us all kinds of resources and opportunities, but it is up to us to ensure that we exploit that potential and develop and use those resources. So this is your flight checklist. This is the survey of the dashboard and the sensors.

Are we functional or not? So as we continue now, we have come to verse three, not given to wine. And you think, oh, I don't even like wine. I don't drink wine, so I'm good.

Remember, these are emblematic. They are exemplary. They are given and put for equality.

So given to wine, what would this reflect? Some people just have a glass of wine from time to time. It's not a big deal. If they don't have one, it doesn't change them.

They're not dependent. They're not, they don't have a craving. It doesn't dominate them.

You remember, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess. And this is an alternative to being filled with the spirit. So when people think of me, do they think of me as being wine-filled or do they think of me as being spirit-filled? Nothing intrinsically wrong with wine.

Jesus talks about new wine and old wine skins and so on. But there is a problem with, and I told you last time when we got to this point that this word literally means para oinas. It means beside the wine.

And do people think of you and think of wine in the same breath? Do they think of you and think, oh, when I went to their house, there was just an entire liquor cabinet right there. You know, you walk in the door and you see this wall of liquor. Is it associated with, and does it seem to be something that is a requirement that's intrinsic that you can't seem to do without? And now subtract out the alcohol and think about anything.

Is somebody just an inveterate devotee or dependent upon any given thing? Are you beside the TV all the time? Are you beside the internet portion of your phone all the time? Are you beside social media all the time? Are you beside something that, people wanna take their young kids on a vacation and, well, I don't have internet. We can't go there, we don't have internet. How can I chat with my friends? How can I keep up? How can I track the memes and the tropes and the trends and the flash mobs and all the rest of the stuff that's going on? I can't live without my phone beside the wine.

What are you like when you are alone? What are you like when you are without certain things? Are we dependent? Some people are news junkies. Some people are stock market junkies. Some people are celebrity junkies.

Some people are so into their hobby. I will give you somewhat of a harmless example. A lot of us here in the church, I say a lot of us, three or four of us guys went up because at various times we've participated on forums, on what you might call a chat board, where you can ask and answer questions and just discuss different things that are of interest.

And so there's one called the Baptist Board and three or four of us got up on there and thought, well, let's participate. Let's hear what others have to say about Calvinism versus Arminianism or issues of the day. What about this? What about that? And people discussing the scriptures and views of the scriptures, what does it mean? What about the rapture? What about the second coming? What about prophecy? What about church polity? What about pneumatology or Christology? What about redemption? And to have discussions that are in the realm of faith and you think, well, this will be interesting.

It'll be edifying and you can reach out, stretch out, interact with the larger world on these things. But what I certainly came to discover and the others with whom I've talked about this, we've all largely left. I went back to the Baptist Board a few days ago just to see what's going on.

And there are guys, that is their addiction. They post several times a day, 12 to 15 times a day every day. And they're looking, they'll just keep posting until they get somebody to respond.

And then they want to cross swords and they want to beat them to death with their view of the Bible. And they want to dominate and they want to crush and they want to overcome anybody else's view. You're wrong.

I'm a Calvinist and you're not, and that makes you wrong. And it's unhealthy. To be beside the wine is to have an unhealthy interest, obsession, dependence, or improper stewardship of time.

I have to think that some of these guys are pastors. Why are you on the Baptist Board and not spending that time digging into the word? You might learn something that would change your mind or inform your view or deepen your understanding, but to be so just obviously needy for this interaction and needing to be right and needing to prove somebody else wrong. And you begin to detect in the boldness and the confidence there behind it is actually insecurity.

And these guys seem to be proving to themselves that they're right by trying to dominate the conversation with everybody else. And they will not leave others alone. They'll hound them.

They'll follow them. They'll nip at their heels. They'll go to other threads and other posts and want to silence them in some way.

It's just very unhealthy. Well, put that for any area that gets an exaggerated emphasis in our life. That's beside the wine.

Verse three, not given to wine is a really good translation. Nothing wrong with wine, but if you're given to it, if it's characteristic, not good. The next one here is not violent.

And this doesn't necessarily mean physically violent. It means the opposite of unity, fellowship, encouragement, being a blessing. You can do violence to relationships.

You can be violent in conversation. You can be violent in criticism. Violence shatters things apart.

Violence rends what ought to be put together. So we can look at ourselves and this is people that say, well, I'm not a criminal. I haven't robbed a liquor store.

Well, what are the areas where you might be regularly criminal? What do we do each year on our taxes? Tax season is already upon us. It takes us this long. We have to start in January to hit the April deadline.

But do people look for ways to cheat the government, to stretch and exaggerate and redefine things so that we can get our taxes down? That's a reflection of a lack of integrity and it does violence to God's order. And yes, we have a confiscatory tax system and tax rates, but part of fearing God and honoring the King is to operate within the law. And if this is not a valid deduction, don't take it.

If this is actually a business expense, fine. But if it's not, don't bend the rules. If God was looking over my shoulder, watching me fill out these forms, am I lying by omission? I'm

just failing to report something.

In academia, we just had a prominent college president resign due to plagiarism in the past, treating someone else's work as their own, presenting it as their own and saying, well, you know, it's true. I just did not attribute where I got it from. What's the harm in that? It's compromise.

And it does violence to the system, not violent. The greed for money, this once again goes back to, and there are some texts that indicate that maybe this is a later addition in the text. You have a text note in your New King James there.

This occurs in other lists. And so it's not wrong to think about it. Even if it's not in this passage, it is in others.

But are we gaining our sense of security and our sense of safety from what we've got in the bank or what we've got in a retirement account? And we do what we do because that is gonna be the most financially beneficial. Do we worry unduly when God has promised that he will supply our needs when we are outward looking, when we are generous, that he knows what we need. And so we can ask him for our daily bread.

We can take no thought for what we will eat or what we will wear. Look at the lilies of the field. They toil not, neither do they spend.

Let yet God clothes them and so on. So this idea of not being given to wine, not being given to money. And these are things that draw us away from a proper emphasis on our spiritual life, our relationship with God, our representation of Jesus Christ, our enablement and empowerment by God, the Holy Spirit.

Oh no, I've got my eyes on something in the lateral horizontal arena. I need this thing to make me feel good. I need this form of stimulation or this form of entertainment or this form of occupation.

And this section of the list addresses that. So we had some positive things, the content of verse two. Now, these are what we are not.

We're not given to wine. We are not violent. We're not greedy for money, but instead, what is the opposite of violent? Gentle.

What is the opposite of given to wine? People that are given to alcohol, many times it changes their personality or it removes their superficial self-control. And the animosities and the quarrelsomeness and the bitterness that has been veneered over, that veneer gets ripped away and you squeeze the fruit and it's either sweet or sour inside. But alcohol, you don't have to squeeze it.

It peels the outer layer away and it gets exposed voluntarily. I was once, I shared a BOQ

room with a really wonderful, sensible, easygoing guy. But when he drank to excess, he became one of the ugliest people I've ever known.

And it was Jekyll and Hyde. And alcohol released a lot of inner demons. And so the opposite of that quarrelsomeness and violence is gentleness and self-control.

What are we remembered for? I knew this guy 30, 40 years ago, 40 now. And he's still memorable for his anger and his temper and his insensitivity and just gross ugliness under the influence. It has stuck with me beside the wine.

So gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous. Notice we have greedy for money, which is easily a part of this list, whether it's actually in this text or not. It is in others, as I said.

But this idea of covetous, it's one thing to want to acquire. It's something else to want what somebody else has. And there's a whole economic theory that is popular today that rich people in our country are too rich and their riches need to be taken away from them.

And this theory is that there's only so much water in the pond. And these people, the 10 wealthiest people in America have nearly 50% of all of the money. And so that money needs to be released by them so that poor people can have it.

And this isn't how the economy works. It doesn't matter how many rich people have how many assets because in the first place, their net worth isn't always cash. But simplistic people who don't understand economics think, well, these guys, there's just stacks and stacks of cash in the bank and a big truck ought to back up to that bank and take all of that cash and just throw it out the windows of tall buildings so that all the poor people can have it.

The reason we have poverty is these rich guys have too much money. And so we're going to rob from the rich and give to the poor. We're going to redistribute the wealth.

That's covetousness. It isn't just I'm impoverished and I want more money. I want that guy's money.

That's the difference. And there is a personal element. There is some other person involved in coveting.

This is why in the 10 commandments, it doesn't say you shall not have an inappropriate desire for a wife or for an ox or for a donkey or for possessions. It says, don't covet your neighbor's wife, your neighbor's ox, your neighbor's donkey, your neighbor's manservant or maidservant. You want it specifically as belonging to your neighbor.

You shall not covet anything that is your neighbor's. And there is this very unhealthy personal element in it. And that's reflected here.

Do people become an element in subjective thought? I'm watching that person. I think

that person has got something they shouldn't have. I should have that, not them.

I should have that position. I should have that job. I should have that standing.

I should have that thing. Unhealthy. And this applies to all of us.

As I've said repeatedly this morning. Verse four, one who rules his own house well. You think, well, you know, in the technical sense, this tells us that pastors and elders in a church, A, they should be married so that they can be a one woman man and B, they should have children.

So there are actually churches that say, we will only have someone on our elder board who is married with kids. Married with no kids, you can't be an elder. Unmarried, not even close.

You can't be a one woman man. And you can't show that you're ruling a house because you don't have a house to rule over. It's just you living in an apartment or whatever.

And this is so wide of the mark. You might as well be a Jew. And when God said, bind his word between your eyes and on your hand, you're gonna get a phylactery and literally do it.

It is the same kind of error to view this as in that literal sense. So what would this mean? Think about it. One who rules his own house well.

Every single one of us has a house. Remember when Jesus told the story of the demon possessed man and when the demon is driven out, he goes into faraway lands and he returns with seven of his friends and finds the house cleaned and swept. And he comes in and the man is many times worse off than he was before the original demon was driven out.

The house is your soul. The house is your heart. The house is your life.

Do we as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, his representatives on this earth, do we rule our house well? What does a well-ruled house look like? There is discipline. There's moderation. There is self-control.

It has a good reputation both inside and outside the faith. We're not profligate. We're not famous for our gold-plated bathtub faucets and our fancy cars and the six or seven figure salary that we draw down as ministers of the gospel, as is the case some places in our country and elsewhere.

What are we known for? What are we individually observed as being? Could somebody say that's someone who lives within their means? That's someone who is moderate in their habits and temperate in their behavior. You don't hear gossip and maligning and judging, issuing forth from their lips. That's somebody that rules well their own house.

This goes along with getting the beam out of our own eye before we engage in moat removal for other people. Are we critical of others and we don't have, and we have this metaphor in English. Do you not have your own house in order? I haven't got my own life squared away.

What am I doing criticizing others, being mean-spirited and judgmental toward others and talking about it and maligning and trying to drag other people down? And people say, well, look at you. This was part of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees is laying heavy burdens on others and they hadn't lifted those burdens with the smallest of their fingers, particularly in their own lives. They were whitewashed tombstones, had no business trying to be spiritual leaders in Israel when they couldn't even lead themselves.

So the blind leading the blind are both gonna fall into the ditch. House is not in order. Ruling well their own house.

Having children in submission with all reverence. So this is previously demonstrated faithfulness and goodness in the exercise of authority. Parents of children who parent well, who have submissive, well-behaved children.

I love going to homes. I was just in one this past week, tuning piano, folks had six children. All a year and a half to two years spaced out.

So the oldest one was nine, the youngest one was getting their bottle. But three boys, three girls, and so courteous, well-mannered. Their parents said, now the gentleman's gonna tune the piano, so please keep the noise down.

Only told them once. I was there for nearly two hours. Never had to remind the kids to be quiet.

They reminded each other. When the younger ones started getting a little bit loud, their next oldest sibling or the one beyond that would say, remember, we got to be quiet. And child would immediately hush.

Extraordinary, impressive. That's a set of parents. That guy, by the way, was the second helicopter pilot.

Flies medevac out of Tahlequah. And I'm sure he's gone a lot. But he and his wife have beautiful, beautifully well-behaved and happy, productive, smart, all homeschooled children.

So impressive. That's the kind of thing. And by the way, they're Catholics.

Books about the saints. I turn my head to listen to a piano and I see the bookshelf and you can tell by the books on the shelf that A, they are Catholic, but B, they take their faith very seriously and they're sharing it with their children. And it has a testimony.

Give me 10 Catholics like that versus one Protestant who is slipshod, sloppy and intemperate and uninterested in their Christian faith. There are many, many Christians that are going right up. Being Catholic is neither here nor there.

It is what is the nature of your faith? Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? And do you take that faith seriously and you live your faith as you understand it from the word of God? It's not gonna be a theology test at the judgment seat of Christ. It's gonna be a measure of our lives. This is why the sheep and goats judgment is all about what did you do? This is why the gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble is characterized as works.

I will show you my faith by my works, James says. Faith without works is dead because it is fruitless. What kind of rapture timing do you believe? What kind of millennial expectations do you have? Not to say these things are unimportant, but what is more important? This gets to priorities.

What is our priority? What I do understand ought to evidence and manifest. That's why this is not a list of beliefs. People want those who are in authority in a church or in a ministry organization to sign a creedal statement of faith.

Statement of faith is not what counts. Why don't you answer this questionnaire? What's your house like? What's your personal life like? What are your habits like? And let's have the 10 people closest to you fill it out and submit it. Their estimate, their observation of you.

What does your life look like? That's what counts. It is not what you believe, it is what you practice in light of your beliefs that counts. And I will tell you, I've known a lot of Catholics and they are likely to have stars in their crowns and be assigned opportunities and closeness with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think they give a light touch to some of the fringy things in the Catholic. I don't think they're particularly obsessed with Mary and they don't think she's their co-redemptrix and the rest of it. They focus on the Lord Jesus.

They focus on the word of God and what their life ought to be. And that's what counts. So children in submission with all reverence, with regard for God, what I do, I do heartily as unto the Lord.

And then in verse five, if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God? Think about this in terms of all of us. This is certainly a wonderful and meaningful and memorable example. Look at your household.

That ought to be in order before you take on the house of God. Makes perfect sense. But think about this.

Do you want to rule and reign with Christ? Do you want to be useful and of service? Do you want to be someone to whom the Lord Jesus comes in his future kingdom and says, you're someone with stability and faithfulness, common sense, proper priorities. You know how to develop goals in the light of your values. Can I give you this assignment to fulfill for me? And you are counted worthy.

When he looks, they've got a commercial on TV and they say, you know, using this bank is such an easy decision. And then it's as easy as this decision. And they've got some kids on a playground picking their teammates.

And this great big, tall, famous basketball player is right in the middle. How hard is it to pick the pro basketball player to be on your team? Obviously he's so overqualified. And then they have other examples of this where a famous guitar player is auditioning for a garage band and so on.

And they say, it's such an obvious choice. Well, turn that around. Wouldn't it be great to be the obvious choice when the Lord Jesus is looking around for someone to serve, someone to count on, someone to rule and reign with him, someone to implement the future plans and purposes of the father in the kingdoms that are to come.

And when his eyes rest on us, we're the obvious choice. What an obvious choice. How will he know that? Because we have lived a life of faithfulness and obedience.

We have taken these characteristics seriously. If we can't rule our own house well, how can we be picked for future service? How can the Lord, when the Lord Jesus looked at his 12 disciples, who did he take with him to the upper room to heal the girl that was not dead, but sleeping? Who did he take with him to the garden? Who did he take to the Mount of Transfiguration? And why? That's what this verse is about. Rule well your own house.

You can't be counted on for larger responsibility. If you've never demonstrated that you take these things seriously, why would you be expected to take them seriously later? And you have no experience. You've got no practice.

He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is much. The parable of the talents. You've been faithful in a few things.

I will make you ruler over many things. This is that time. It is today, it is now, when we have this great opportunity to fulfill these qualities.

Forget about picking formal staff in a church, although when you've got a big church, that's important. This isn't here for that. It can certainly apply, but it's bigger, it's larger.

And every single one of us needs to look at ourselves. This is a preview. This is a copy of the final exam before it's given.

I used to love that when professors would teach and they say, yeah, I teach the test because everything you need to know is going to be on that final exam. So I'll give you the exam questions. You just be sure you know them and can reproduce those answers without the book and without a cheat sheet.

Learn what's on the test. I will give you the test. When you pass the test, you've successfully taken this course.

This is the final exam. These are the criteria that will be used for every single one of us at the judgment seat of Christ. Every one of these criteria, none of them left out, none of them missing.

Everybody, all of us have to have all of these qualities to be approved. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, will look at every single one of these and measure ourselves and take the steps necessary to not just look at the weight on the scale, but then lose the unnecessary weight, gain the strength, gain, you know, there's people that have different kinds of surgery. A lot of us have had various kinds.

And then afterward, the doctor and the surgeon or whoever will prescribe physical therapy. But physical therapy hurts. I'm stretching something that my body's telling me that shouldn't stretch, that shouldn't bend that way, that, oh, no, no, no.

If you don't do the physical therapy, you know what happens? You never get your flexibility and your mobility back. And to work through the painful process of rehabilitation restores us to function and to opportunity and to flexibility and to strength. When we measure ourselves and see that we're coming short, we've got to go through the painful process of rehabilitation.

We have to know how it is done. The PT people will tell you the exercises. You can come to us and we'll supervise you, but you can do this at home.

But you've got to do it. Some people don't have the willpower. And so the doctor will say, you must go to this facility and I'm going to have these people watch you until you do it, because otherwise, you're never going to walk right after this joint replacement.

You're never going to recover flexibility and strength and range of motion if you don't do these. And if you don't have the ability to do it, I'm going to put somebody over you that will make you. We would like to be those who, with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, do the steps to gain these strengths and exercise them and continue to express them.

This is the final exam. You want to know what's going to be measured at the judgment seat? This is it. Not a novice.

What does this tell us? Well, read the rest of the verse. Not a newbie, not fresh to the faith, lest being puffed up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. The same condemnation.

What is the condemnation of Satan? Read Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28. He was lifted up in his heart. I will, I will, I will, I will, I will.

I'll be like God. I'll lift my throne above the stars of God. Now, pride, arrogance.

Pride is what got Eve to eat the fruit and to be careful about making commitments and entering into activities without having taken the time to study, to practice, to become experienced. You don't hand a teenager the keys to a brand new car when they've never driven. We have training courses for driving.

We have requirements that for six months, a licensed driver must be in the front seat with you so that you can gain experience and wisdom. So don't undertake a cross country trip in a car when this is your third or fourth time to drive. You just don't know enough.

And we should not undertake things that are beyond our scope. Famous movie line, a man's got to know his limitations. We have to recognize that the time is not right to enter into relationship.

The time is not right to enter into a commitment. The time is not right. Sometimes we know that we're not ready for a promotion.

We're not ready for gaining wealth. We're not ready for the kind of opportunity that someone is offering us. And it is a test of humility to not think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think and thereby pride goeth before a fall and a haughty spirit before destruction.

We are not to try to convince somebody of spiritual truths when we don't really know them ourselves. We shouldn't try to enter into some sort of what seems like a ministry opportunity when our own house is not yet in order. Not a neophyte, not a newbie, not inexperienced and unprepared.

Because the danger isn't a well-meant shortcoming. It is pride. And I dismiss the fact that I don't have experience.

The younger generation today thinks that they can take the reins of government and social issues and the rest of it, and they've got it all figured out. And it's hubris, it's arrogance. Listen to the older generations who can tell you, we already tried that.

Learn from history so that you don't repeat it. And it takes humility to listen to those who have more experience, to heed parents who say you're going too fast. You need to take

your time.

You need to slow down. You need to get your feet under you. You need to build a foundation for this.

Don't buy a \$550,000 house now that you've gotten your first job that's slightly above minimum wage. And you say, oh, I've got it all figured out. Life happens.

Listen to those with more experience, have humility. Don't let pride trip you up. Otherwise you will come to the same condemnation as the devil.

And remember the devil's condemnation is in the spiritual realm. It's not just you're going to have tragic failures and missteps in life, but it is going to end up in spiritual failure, spiritual dire straits. And that brings us to verse seven.

Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside. Both verse six and verse seven have a lest clause. You've got to have humility rather than pride and recognize where you don't have the experience.

You're not ready for a thing. Cultivate humility and not arrogance. And if you've got things that can be criticized from the outside that you have not fixed, you need a good testimony.

Those who are outside what? Outside the family, outside the fold, outside the church, secular employee, employer evaluation, military evaluation. Those who are outside, this has nothing to do with, are you a good deacon? Are you serving food to the widows? This is, what is the conduct of your life? And if it looks sloppy and unkempt and dangerous and self-centered and self-seeking and doesn't manifest stability and the fruit of the spirit from an outside onlooker, fix that before you undertake anything else. Good testimony among those who are outside.

And we'll see this next time over and over again. We cannot disregard what the world thinks. We are in the world, we are not of the world, but we must be aware of the impression that we make on the world.

This is important and often overlooked biblical point. And I was amazed at how many places this is emphasized. It wasn't necessarily emphasized to me in my training and my past Bible studies under others, but we're going to see next time being aware of the effect and the impression that we have on others and having a good testimony before those who are outside.

This goes all the way back to chapter two, praying for those who have the rule over us and that being good and acceptable, not only in the sight of God and our savior, but also that nobody can bring a charge against believers and failing to do this as resulted in a lot of historical hindrance to the good news of Jesus Christ. We'll see that next time, but let's

close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for leaving us so well provided for in terms of illumination and information as to how you would have us live our lives.

You've not only given us the standard, but also the means and the motive and the opportunity to meet and exceed those standards by the presence and power of your spirit and the light of your word. We pray that as we reflect and endeavor to put these things into practice, that our efforts in that line will be blessed, that the Holy Spirit will find us ready pupils and apt instructees, and that following the light that has shined on our path, we will be thoroughly equipped for every good work and we will reflect the glory of our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask it in his name, amen.