

Acts 03-10-24b

Let's resume our study now in Acts chapter eight. One quick thing I want to clarify, as I was thinking about it and talking about it during the break: when Philip preached the name of Jesus Christ and the kingdom, and the Samaritans accepted that and believed in it, they are saved at that point. And with that salvation comes all of the 36 things that you and I received when we accepted Christ as our Savior.

The falling of the Spirit that takes place when John and Peter arrive and lay hands on these people is not the initial showing up of the Holy Spirit. It is that visible supernatural manifestation of the Spirit that was present at Pentecost. We know the disciples had received the Holy Spirit from the Lord Jesus on at least two previous occasions, in the resurrection appearance where He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Spirit."

And He said that on a couple of different occasions. So we know that the Holy Spirit wasn't something new to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, but when He fell on them like flaming tongues of fire and they suddenly began to speak of their languages and miraculous things were taking place, this was the sign of His presence, the visible manifestation of His presence. But it doesn't mean He had never been there before.

And I think that's the same thing we have in Acts chapter 8. At the point that they believed, Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." It doesn't believe and have an apostle touch you. When they believe, they are saved.

And if they had died one second after they believed, they're a church-age believer with all the rights and privileges thereunto pertaining. But it is important in the plan of God for authentication, for healing the breach, the historic breach between the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom, between Israel and Judah, between the Samaritans and the Hebrews of the Hebrews, to reunite them in both directions by sending Peter and John, who come and legitimize in a symbolic way the faith of the Samaritan Christians. And at the same time, they return to Jerusalem and authenticate for the Jerusalem Christians the validity of the faith and God's blessing in a visible and manifest way on the Samaritan Christians.

It is like the sutures of a doctor drawing both sides of a wound back together. And Peter and John are sent by God. Philip is the point man, and he is the means by which the Samaritans are able to objectively hear the gospel and hear the news of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Once that foot is in the door, the adding and the cementing together of the Samaritan church and the Jerusalem church is made possible by this visit of Peter and John. So anyway, I just wanted to clarify that it is not that the Holy Spirit did not come at all until Peter and John came. It is this supernatural, visible manifestation of His presence that descends at the touch of the apostles.

Well, this impresses Simon. Look at verse 18. When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Well, if you stop and think about this, even Philip, who could do these supernatural things, could not impart that to others on any basis, money or faith or otherwise. It was only the apostles. This is unique to the apostles.

Philip received the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit either at Pentecost or shortly thereafter in the company of the apostles. He can go to Samaria and heal and cast out demons and heal the paralyzed and the lame and spread joy throughout the city, but he cannot pass on the supernatural ministries and manifestations of the Spirit to others. That requires the visit of the apostles.

Well, Simon says, "I want to do like Peter and John do. I'll pay you a lot of money if you'll let me in on the secret. Give me the magic crystal or whatever it is. Say the seven secret words over my head. Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Now, let's think about this in terms of principle, because that's where our application comes from. The first thing we've seen is this rift, this strong cultural and traditional and historical grievance between the Samaritans and the Jews in Jerusalem, and that that has to go by the wayside. And God makes a very strong point on both sides. The Samaritans have got to accept Peter and John. The Jerusalem church has to accept the testimony of Peter and John about the Samaritans. And they have to get over that.

Yes, you've had this forever. We saw a documentary about the origin and rise of Islam. And Mohammed, in creating this religion, stressed Allah as the one God.

In the pre-Islamic Arab world, each tribe had their god or gods that they held to and worshiped. And my daddy worshiped this god, and his daddy worshiped him, and on back into the dark reaches of the Bedouin past, this has always been our tribal good-luck-charm god. This has been the plastic Jesus on our dashboard. This has been the St. Christopher around our neck. This has been our guy.

Well, Mohammed went down there to the holy area in Mecca where they had all these idols set up and pulled them all down and destroyed them. Well, this sent a huge shockwave through the whole Arab world because this had roots going back into the unknown dark past. Some people thought it went all the way back to the teraphim of Abraham and Rachel and Jacob and that kind of thing, that these went back that far. And here, Mohammed tore them all down.

And he said, "Look, there's a new paradigm. There is a new religion, and you either join up or die." That's essentially it. And he tore these down. Well, people had to adjust. They had to come to a new way of thinking, or they weren't around to worry about it.

Well, that may not be the best example, but these people, the Samaritans, have got to get rid of this old baggage. Now, I think anybody would admit that idolatry is a waste of time. I'm not saying Islam is any better, but the idolatry had to go. And in the same way, these prejudices and these long-held beliefs had to go in the light of the gospel, in the light of the message of the kingdom.

So in the same way, we now have a separate and distinct thing happening in Samaria. The Samaritans up to this point have held that the power of God and the light of God and the knowledge of God all resides in Simon the Magician. He is the sort of Samaritan pope. He's the Samaritan Mohammed. He's the big cheese. If you want to get to God, you want to see the power of God, you go to Simon the Magician.

Well, Simon sees the winds of change, and the old idols are being torn down, and the old guy that everybody looked up to is kind of passé, because now here's this Christianity, which he has believed in and which he has bought into, so to speak. And he's trying to buy into it literally now. He wants to resume his role. He wants to syncretize his old way of life, his old status, and his old methods of operation with the new.

He doesn't want to set it all aside and sweep clean and start fresh. He says, "Give me this power, and after you guys leave and go back to Jerusalem, I will do what I did before, but just under a new flag." Kind of like the SS battalion that en masse at the end of World War II went and joined the French Foreign Legion and got sent to fight the Viet Minh for the French in Indochina. Same basic function: hack and slash, kill, murder, be as brutal as possible, just in a different arena.

Well, that is a good example because that was basically a ministry of violence and death and destruction. And if you want to see fighting fire with fire, look at the ex-Nazis fighting the Viet Minh backed by the Red Chinese. You want to talk about a scary group of short people over there in the Orient.

They are just unbelievably—did I tell you about this fish thing? About them eating fish? They have a delicacy in China, and what they do, the chef gets a fish and he scales the fish and he guts the fish, but his goal is to not kill the fish. He keeps it alive. So he scales it. The fish is alive, its little mouth is going and its eyes are bugging and it's saying, "Help me, please."

The Chinese chef scales the fish, guts the fish, grabs the fish by the head, and dips it in boiling oil and cooks his body, all the time endeavoring to keep it alive. Puts it on a plate and serves it to the Chinese patrons of the restaurant, who get this plate and the fish is still—his mouth is opening and closing, his eyes are still, he's alive—and they eat the fish alive.

Now, that takes some cold, chilling view of life. But when you read about the Nazis and the Viet Minh tangling with each other and the Red Chinese behind the Viet Minh, you see that sort of thinking carried out in the human realm, and it is brutal. It is evil.

It's saying—I'm not saying that. I'm not branding any Chinese person. I'm saying this happened in China, among the Chinese, and the Communist Chinese, as a group, fit this profile. And I will say that to the face of any Red Communist Chinese person you want to bring me. Now, it is not to broad-brush the Chinese as individuals, but

as a group, you do not know until you read books such as *The Devil's Guard*, if you can find a copy of that and read that story, you'll have some idea what I'm talking about.

Well, when a civilization is shot through with evil and Christianity comes in, you don't blend the evil with Christianity. You don't syncretize. You don't incorporate. You don't try to blend the two. This is the leaven. We're gonna see this when we continue our study of biblical numbers, the number three. Do you remember the story Jesus told about a woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal? Three is the number of divine perfection, but if you take the number three and then you mix leaven with it, the whole thing gets polluted. The whole thing gets leavened.

And that is what happens when you mix human energy. That's what happens in things like *Experiencing God*, this program that takes genuine biblical Christianity and then lets the alien monster stick its head through the chest and pop out of human works and righteousness by works. Find out where God is at work and join Him in His work. That is the essence and substance of the *Experiencing God* program.

Look around you and see where God is at work. You will know because God will speak to you through the Bible, through impulses, through other people, through circumstances, and all of those together have to speak to you. Well, the Bible now is just one of many ways through which God will speak. There's sort of a mystical element that goes on here, and you will mystically decide that this particular ministry over here is the one for you, and you should jump in and join that because if you don't, you may not actually be saved.

And then you get the P in TULIP and the perseverance of the saints idea. And in *Experiencing God*, it says you have a mandate: if you are a true Christian, you will be on mission at all times. This is a quote from the book. You will be on mission at all times, and the mission is understood to be evangelism. If you're not evangelizing, you are not with Christ. You're not joining God in His work. Therefore, you are not spiritual. You're not experiencing God, and your salvation is in question.

Well, it is an evil. It is a vicious, insidious, highly popular, on your coffee cup, on your coaster, on your T-shirt, on your calendar, right up there with the prayer of Jabez. You can just do Jabez on one side and *Experiencing God* on the other and just have the twin Gorgon-headed evils right there on your desk. And you can bring me any *Experiencing God* person and any prayer of Jabez person, and I'll tell them to their face that very same thing. I'll take them to the Scripture and show them where they have mishandled and mangled the Word of God.

Well, I say all that to say this: look at Simon. Simon sees this. He says, "Look, I will put a big chunk of change in the offering plate here if you'll let me in on the secret of how to make people have these supernatural manifestations."

Now, in verse 20, if you have a New King James, it says, "But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you.'" The literal translation from the Greek is—let me say this again—the literal translation from the Greek is, "To hell with you and your money." I'm not making that up. "To hell with you and your money" is the literal translation from the Greek.

Now, this is kind of a scary thing if you're a believer. You've been baptized. You're hanging around with the apostles. You see all these things going on. You get a big, high-pressure enthusiasm going. You say, "Boy, I would really like to join in with this, and I would be willing to pay for it." And then the foremost of the apostles comes up in verse 20: "Petros de eipen pros auton, To argyriou sou syn soi eie eis apoleian."

Apoleon is obliteration. Apolia is annihilation. When Jesus was talking about Judas and He said—He's praying to His Father—"Of those You have given Me, I have lost none except the son of perdition." Apolia: loss, annihilation.

So basically, Peter says to him, "Your silver, your argyriou, with you, may you go into apoleon. May you go into oblivion, into hell." That's the idea here. "To hell with you and your money" is a real good colloquial English translation.

Because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. He is not only off the track, he is not even in the same county with the track. So, you have neither part nor portion in this matter.

And the word there, "you have neither part nor portion": the part is our old friend meros, division of the inheritance. You have no legitimate share. The portion word is kleros. Kleronomia is a related word to this. In

this matter, and it literally says in this logos, in this word, in this matter. Logos does double duty, talking about word, message, matter. For your heart is not right in the sight of God.

Now, most of the commentators say, "Now see, he's not saved." Well, he is, but his heart is not right. And this is a common affliction for believers, and you see this happen all the time.

For example, somebody who is in the public eye, like a football player for the Dallas Cowboys, maybe a star receiver or a star running back, suddenly comes to faith in Christ. Well, they have been a spokesman for a lot of things, and now they're a Christian, so they go on TBN and they are a spokesman. They do the same thing. They think, "Well, I can be an advocate and a help to this whole Christian deal. I'll get on and talk about it, just like I was talking about, you know, commercial products and my team or whatever else."

This is simony. And it has come into usage as a word. Simony is the selling of Christian influence for money. Simony is, "Well, I will pray for you, or I'll light a candle for you, or I will get you in good with God in return for whatever cash you want to send."

Well, it is an adulteration. It is an admixture of evil with good. And when Peter says to a fellow believer, "To hell with you and your money," this is just about the strongest rebuke you can get. Very akin to, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter can give as good as he gets. He knows what a strong rebuke sounds like. He's received a few himself. And he delivers this with apostolic authority.

Jesus told the disciples, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth actually has been loosed and bound in heaven." It's a perfect tense. And so this is a reflection of the divine attitude, is the point.

There are many today who make merchandise of the Word of God. "Send us your gift. Send us your prayer card. We will lay hands on it. We will pray over you." And they engage in the very thing that Simon Peter says God will send into the lake of fire.

It is a very dangerous thing to make merchandise of the Word of God, to make merchandise of the power of God, or to seemingly offer some sort of end, like having your request prayed for. You see this all around us today.

And people didn't go say, "Well, what evil scheme can I concoct? How can I go mix evil with Christianity?" People fall into this because they don't think. They don't read their Bible. They don't come to an understanding of the way God works.

And they say, "Well, look at how many people we can bless. We can stay on TV and give the gospel of Christ by doing this. We can pay for more stations. We can spread to more areas." Rationalization, justification in the mind, but it is not biblical and it is not right.

We can do this ourselves. Now, we're not off starting TV ministries or in any danger of doing so. But if we rationalize the ways of the world into our Christian faith, into our Christian life, we will be guilty of this very same thing. And we will receive just as strong a rebuke at the judgment as Simon receives here.

By the way, do you not find it a little ironic that this is Simon who had received a rebuke from the Lord speaking to Simon, passing along a rebuke from the Lord? This is sort of a looking-in-the-mirror, Simon-to-Simon. You know, Simon says, "To hell with you," which is where Satan is going. And Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." And there's more than a passing coincidence here.

What does he say in verse 22? "Change your mind, therefore, about this wickedness of yours." He doesn't say, "Change your mind and believe the gospel, change the mind and come into faith in Christ." He says, "Change your mind about your wickedness and pray to God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you."

This is a matter, Peter says, not between you and me. I am not your pope. This is a matter between you and God. Peter does not say, "I will appeal to God on your behalf." He doesn't say, "I will go talk to the Blessed Mother for you and see if between me and Mary, we can get you off the hook." Does he?

He says, "You, Simon, need to pray to God about getting forgiveness for this grievous evil that you've contemplated in your heart." Now, lest there be any doubt, let me just put one final nail in the Catholic coffin

here. You know the whole idea that Peter was the first pope and that Jesus left him in charge and he's running the church at this point? And this is something that Joseph also pointed out on the break.

But go all the way back to verse 14. "When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John." They sent Peter and John. Now, if Peter was the pope, why doesn't it say, "When Peter heard that Philip had had success in Samaria, Peter appointed John and Andrew?"

The apostles are processing information and making decisions as a leaderless group. There is no single leader amongst them. And the apostles, as a group, lend their authority to a trip and they send. They, as a group, decided that Peter and John should go. Peter is sent. He is a sendee, not a sender.

So this is powerful medicine against the mistaken belief that he is already wearing a pointed hat and running the church, because he's not. Anyway, in the same way, when you get down to verse 22, he tells Simon, "You pray to God. You get this straightened out between you and the Lord with regard to forgiveness of your sin."

"For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." Salvation alone does not release us from the poison of bitterness. It does not release us from the bonds of iniquity.

People who run around preaching the gospel, saying, "If you'll just believe in Jesus, all of your problems will be solved. Jesus is the big Excedrin pill. He's the big Band-Aid. He is the great antibiotic. And if you'll just come to faith in Jesus, your life is just going to all turn to roses." That is not a biblical truth.

It is the first step down a road where those things take place. But it is pursuit of righteousness by faith on a daily basis. It is walking in the light. It is walking in love. It is walking by means of the Spirit.

Walking is a process of putting one foot in front of the other, time after time, day after day, situation after situation. This is how we walk into the land of promise, the place of blessing, the place of security, the place of strength, the place of opportunity, the place of service, the place of reflecting the glory of God. Those things are not automatic with salvation.

And many are going to slide down the big escalator through the wide gate to destruction because they thought, "Well, I've got my fire insurance. I've got my ticket out of the lake of fire. And I'm just going to sit here and wait for God to carry me to glory and give me a harp and wings and a crown. And I'm going to sing and eat manna and have a big time," and ignore the fact that we are enjoined. We are commanded. We are required to walk the walk.

"You are poisoned by bitterness. You need to go to God," Peter says. "You need to pray. You need to pay attention to the Word of God. You need to get on the road of the life of faith to be freed from bitterness, to be freed from iniquity. You have to avail yourself of the grace of God. It is not automatic. It requires action on your part."

So Simon answered and said, "Please pray to the Lord for me that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

Well, what did Peter just get to say? "You pray," Peter says. And Simon says, "No, you pray. You pray for me." Peter just got through saying, "Look, Simon, you go to the Father and talk to Him about forgiveness. You need to express what's in your heart." And Peter says, "I don't know if you're going to get forgiveness or not because I don't know if you've got the attitude of change of mind."

"And if you do not change your mind and if you do not start getting rid of this poison of bitterness and these bonds of iniquity through God's grace, then maybe you're not going to be forgiven." He says, "That's between you and the Father. You get on your knees and straighten it out with God." And Simon says, "How about you pray for me? That all sounds real bad. So you pray for me."

Well, we have to listen to the Word of God. If the Word of God says you have to do something, then don't lay it off on someone else.

Now, later church tradition—we don't have any more information in the Word of God about Simon the Magician. There's a little bit more later on in Acts, not much. But later church tradition says that Simon Magus became an opponent of Christianity and had sort of miracle contests with the apostle Peter. And Peter would do

a miracle and Simon would do a miracle. And he would end up being bested by the apostle because, of course, God is greater than the man and this kind of thing.

And that Simon Magus wanted to continue to be the big cheese. And so he decided that he was the Christ. And he said, "Oh, this whole thing about Christ being dead for three days, being raised, is no big deal. I can do that. Bury me for three days and I will rise again." So they dug a hole and buried him. And three days later, nothing happened. And that was the end of Simon Magus. That's what church tradition says.

Now, whether or not that actually happened, nobody really knows. I suspect it's an exaggeration. I prefer to stick with what Scripture says. But I do think that's a funny story. "Bury me for three days and I'll come out." Well, everybody stood around on the third day and nothing happened.

Well, verse 25 says, "When they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans." It doesn't say exactly who they are. You get the idea that at a minimum, this is Peter and John and possibly Philip.

So as they are returning through the Samaritan region, heading back to Jerusalem, they're preaching along the way the word of the Lord in many villages of the Samaritans. And you get the idea that there is a response. If they got rejected in the first few villages, they might have just hightailed it on out. But evidently there is a response because they go to many villages and evidently kind of wended their way back to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel. So there is this great response.

This was foreshadowed back in the days of the Lord Jesus. We already looked at John chapter 4 that talks about the woman at the well and the people of the city of Sychar who came forth. You can put with this the episode that takes place where Jesus heals the 10 lepers in Luke chapter 17, verse 11 and following.

It happened as Jesus went to Jerusalem. He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. This was uncommon. This would be kind of like a—I can't think of a good analogy. I started to say like a black man traipsing through the Deep South, you know, in Reconstruction, or maybe like a rebel with his uniform on going through the streets of Boston or something in like 1866. Somebody who is sort of anathema going through a region where they are manifestly unwelcome and there is animosity traditionally on both sides. But Jesus went right through Samaria.

As He entered a certain village, there met Him 10 men who were lepers who stood afar off. They lifted up their voice and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them, He said to them, "Go show yourselves to the priests." So it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned and with a loud voice glorified God and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not 10 cleansed? Where are the other nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

And what this tells us is, yes, there were 10 who were cleansed of leprosy, but one of the 10 was truly made well. And he was the Samaritan because he genuinely appreciated, genuinely had faith in the Lord Jesus, recognized Him for who He was, fell at His feet in thankful worship. And Jesus says, "When you go your way, you are truly well." And his healing goes way beyond his physical circumstance.

And that was in Samaria. And that was a Samaritan. And this kind of thing foreshadowed the fact that there was going to be a great response to the gospel of Christ outside of Israel, among the Samaritans, and eventually among the Gentiles. And we've seen other instances that did the same thing.

Well, what do we draw from all of this? In our first session tonight, when we looked at the rift between the Jewish Jews and the Samaritan Jews and the animosity, we've already seen there was a similar rift between the Greekish Jews and the Jewish Jews, the Hebrews. And Christianity is calling these people to heal those rifts and close those gaps.

Paul later on is going to write that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female. And not meaning that there is no such thing as a distinction or differentiation, but

there should be no division on that basis. There should be no, “We are up here and you are down there,” on that basis.

And the fact that women are not allowed to preach does not mean that anyone should look down on women in the church or think any less of them or diminish or limit their opportunities for ministry just because there is a particular restriction on them.

What does it mean to us when we see that? What does it mean to us when we see Simon Magus trying to do in Christianity what he did in his previous life? Trying to retain influence, trying to retain and secure position, trying to be the go-to guy that people will come to as they used to do.

What does this really hook into in our souls? It's our lust for approbation, for approval, for popularity. Some of us, more than others, have a real need for human attention. And Simon is one of these people. And he says, “Well, I'm a Christian, but I still want that adulation. I still want to be the people. I want to be the name on everyone's lips. I want to be in the eye of the public.”

Well, others of us don't really struggle with that. So do we get an out-of-jail-free card and we don't have to think about Simon Magus? Not at all. Look at what Peter says in the softened-down version: “Your money perish with you because you thought the gift of God could be purchased with money.”

We sometimes think that God's favor can be earned if we do certain things. “Well, look at what I have done.” Some people literally think it's what they put in the offering plate. “Well, the Lord can't ignore what I put in the offering.”

I think about some of these big downtown churches that I'm sort of close to since I work near there now. And there are people who are in the heavy-wallet brigade, and this is there. They say, “Well, I don't want to go to Borneo and minister, but I'll put a big chunk in the plate and let other people do that and God will have to bless me.”

We sometimes think if we wear a particular hair shirt, if we go through certain painful processes or do some other thing, that we put ourselves in line for God's blessing by some sort of recompense. We scratch God's back and He will scratch ours. Well, it's blasphemous to even think it.

But you look at Simon and realize that we pull things forward from our past. Some of us grew up in a social melee where you don't want to be beholden. If someone does something for you, you want to go do something back for them. They invite you over for dinner. You have them over for dinner, and you've got to keep the scales balanced. You don't want to be in debt to someone and they keep doing and doing and you haven't. And you start feeling this need to pitch in and to chip in.

And when this seeps into our spiritual life, it's like Simon pulling his old life into the new. And it is an evil. You cannot contribute to grace. You cannot earn anything from God. Christ earned all of God's favor on the cross. We can accept it. We can qualify for it by being faithful and being obedient. But we do not earn it.

And there's a distinction, and it requires a little bit of thought to think about what's the difference in qualifying for something and earning it. When you think about a test that you take, you have to have a minimum score in order to qualify for it. You have to get a certain minimum on ACT or the GCT or the GRE or any of these other alphabetical tests that they give. They have the ASVAB and they have the SAT and all the rest of them.

But there are certain things that you have to get a minimum score to qualify. However, if you show up at the admissions office waving your piece of paper, they don't say, “Hey, looky there, I guess we'll let you in for free and you don't have to pay tuition and you don't have to pay books and you don't have to pay fees and you don't have to pay room and board or any of the rest of that.” Because looky there, that is just a qualification that allows you to apply. But that alone doesn't get you into the college.

In the same way, our trust in God qualifies us, puts us in the position where we can receive God's grace and God's blessing, but He gives it all to us. We don't earn it. We don't deserve it. We can't pay for it. We can't buy it.

The ministry of God's Holy Spirit is not something that comes to us because we earn or deserve it. We qualify for it because of our faith and our desire. But we don't deserve it and we don't earn it and we never can.

So we do not want our inheritance going into oblivion. We do not want the Lord Jesus at the judgment seat saying, "Into oblivion with the fruit of your life and your inheritance." Many people are going to be camped outside the gates of the New Jerusalem watching the smoke ascend from the lake of fire, and they haven't been harmed by the second death. They lost all of the potential inheritance they could have had.

The standing and the opportunities and the reflecting of God's glory have been lost in the same way that Simon here is in danger of losing it by seeking to establish their own righteousness, by trying to buy their way. Jesus said, "Ever since the Law and the Prophets up through John the Baptist, the kingdom has been preached and men try to buy their way in by force." "I will get myself in. I will buy my way and I will work my way in." We can't do it. It is all of grace. It is all of grace.

Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank You for making the truth of Your Word available to us. Thank You for the ministry of Your Holy Spirit to give us perspicacity, to give us understanding and to give us memory and the ability to apply what we learn. We pray that our future decisions and actions will reflect an understanding and an appreciation for these truths. We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified in our daily walk through the things that we have learned from Your Word. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.