

Exod 03-05-25a

We continue our worship this morning on this Memorial Day weekend in the year 2003. Let's pause for a moment to prepare ourselves to address the Word of God. I was thinking about golf this past week.

They had the big tournament in Fort Worth and the lady played for the first time since the 50s that a lady has played in the golf tournament. It always reminds me of the old tired joke where the golf instructor says to the man, well, first you have to stand up and address the ball. So the man walks up and says, hello, ball.

But to address something is to approach it and to get ready to do something with it. That's what they do in golf. If you address a problem or if you address an issue, you analyze it and prepare to deal with it.

And we address the Word of God in the power of God's Holy Spirit. So it's always an important time that we spend, although it is brief, it is crucial. It doesn't take very long to turn the key on your car and start it if it's healthy.

But that's a critical time. If you don't turn the key and get the engine going, you're going to be sitting there a long time looking at unchanging scenery. So we take a brief moment at the beginning of our study to ensure that God the Holy Spirit can do His work in us.

Shall we pray? Father, what a privilege it is to live in this country, to be enjoying the prosperity and the freedoms and the luxuries that we take for granted. The kings of the ancient lands did not enjoy the things that we take for granted just in terms of basic utilities and of comfort and of entertainment and nourishment, protection, provisions of all sorts come to us from You. We know that every good and perfect gift comes from You, and we thank You for that.

We thank You for the opportunity that that affords us to be free of care and free of worry in terms of sheer survival so that we can devote ourselves to important things, and there is no more important task that You have set for us than the growth in grace and in knowledge of our Savior. We thank You for this nation. We thank You for those who have served not only in the armed forces and those who have given their lives, but those who served and survived to come home and become a part of the business world and political world and the various infrastructures that continue to support our country.

We thank You for those who have served in less notable or less visible ways to provide this great American civilization and culture and environment in which we live, the great parts of it. We thank You for the opportunity we have because of the scholarship of many who have devoted themselves to the spiritual battle and the study of Your Word, that we stand on the shoulders of those who have diligently studied the Word and have given us the theological framework that supports and enhances our understanding of what we study every week. We ask Your blessing on us this morning as we study.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will find our hearts ready and we'll be able to deeply implant the Word so that it bears the fruit for which You saved us and for which You take us to Your kingdom. We thank You most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ who loved us and was faithful to the end and even now intercedes on our behalf. We who have no redeeming qualities and are hopeless and helpless and useless apart from Your grace, and yet He gave Himself for us and He is returning for us and He will take us to ever be with Him.

It is a grace beyond imagination, beyond comprehension, and we thank You for it and we pray that we can in some way justify His sacrifice and His faithfulness on our behalf by fulfilling the calling for which we have been purchased and entered into Your plan and Your family and the royal priesthood and the heavenly citizenship and all of the other things that You have granted to us. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

For our scripture reading this morning, turn with me to Psalm 1. Psalm 1. My attention was invited to this psalm because my father taught from Psalm 1 this past week up in Claremore. Their pastor, of course, departed some weeks ago and they are having guest pastors on Sunday and different men in the church are filling in on Wednesday nights. My father has had the chance to do that more than once.

I asked him what he was going to cover. I didn't have to provide any input. He's got plenty of resources and great insight and thoughts about this all by himself.

So he was pointing out some of the great things in this psalm and I thought it would make a worthy reading for us this morning in the light of our study in Exodus where we will resume this morning in chapter 11. But in Psalm chapter 1 it says, Blessed is the man, or in the old days we would say blessed. We don't keep that second syllable emphasis in very many of our words, but when we read the Bible you hear people say blessed or cursed or hallowed be thy name.

We sustain and keep up the old pronunciations in some way, but it basically means blessed. Blessed means blessed. It says, Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. I am particularly struck by the first verse here in the light of our recent study on Tuesday nights.

In the latest few lessons in the Fundamentals series, we looked at Jesus healing the man who was let down through the roof. Remember the three verbs that we looked at, the three actions there. Jesus said, rise or stand and walk.

Jesus saw his faith and he says, stand up and walk. Take up your bed, go to your house. The idea of being incapable and unable, being given the ability after Jesus sees his faith and forgives his sins, a picture of salvation.

What do we do after salvation? Well, we've got to stand. We've got to remove ourselves from our formerly prone position. Stand up with the new capability that God gives us through his word and through his spirit and then walk.

And you see those ideas here. You have walking and standing and sitting. But this is the blessed man who does not participate in these three kinds of standing and walking and sitting down, which is a return to the immobile position.

It starts out saying, who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Suppose we've been saved. We arise.

We grab our gear and we, in the artillery, at the end of a period of providing fire support and it's time to move the battery to a new location, the chief of smoke or whoever's issuing the orders will holler out all through the battery position. He'll say, CSMO, CSMO, which in the Marine artillery basically means collect your stuff and move out. CSMO, collect your stuff, grab your gear and move out.

So we've done this after salvation and we've begun to move. We're trying to walk in the light as he is in the light and maintain fellowship with God and maintain a cleansed status. The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, keeps on cleansing us from all sin.

It tells us in 1 John 1, 7. But suppose we become distracted. We become deflected. We get interested in other things.

We kind of lose sight. Be like someone rowing across a lake who has a fixed point on the shore that he's using as a guide to make sure he rows a straight course. But then his thoughts begin to wander and he begins to think about other things.

The first thing you know, he's off rowing in some other direction, rowing into the path of shipping or something. Well, we're still walking, but now we've departed the light. We're walking somewhere else.

We're blessed if we continue to walk in the light. If we're walking, but we suddenly take an exit. Have you ever done this? It's easy to do in Dallas.

You get in a certain lane. You can do this even up and down Jupiter. You're in the rightmost lane.

If you don't watch carefully, first thing you know, you're in a right turn only and you're off on some other tangent. If you try to go down Forest heading west here, if you're not paying attention, you'll find yourself on Skillman instead of on Forest. And you're heading south instead

of west.

It's an easy thing to do, especially if you're talking on your cell phone or deep in thought or your wife's explaining something to you in a forceful manner. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly. Where would we set our foot that it would no longer be in the light, no longer illuminated by the word of God? Psalm 119 tells us in two different verses, Psalm 119.11 and Psalm 119.105. It says, Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

By word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Well, if we lose sight of the word that lights our path, illuminates the goings of our feet, we're going to be walking in the counsel of the ungodly. These are the suggestions and the advice and the experience and the wisdom of the world.

The wisdom of human experience, the wisdom of human cause and effect. We're blessed if we walk not in that kind of counsel. What happens if you start walking in the counsel of the ungodly? Well, pretty soon you'll slow down and stop walking and you're going to be standing.

You're going to be standing in the way or the path of sinners. What's going on in the path of sinners? Well, there's lots of other people going up and down. They're treading different paths and you find that your associations are now on this path where the sinners walk.

And that's where your converse and that's where your fellowship and that's where your comfort zone is going to be. You're going to be comfortable in the milieu. A lot of us can remember back being young, being in our late teens and early twenties.

And sometimes maybe you have a job or you're in school or whatever and it gets to be Friday night. And you get the idea that there's something going on somewhere and you're not there. And you wish you were there.

And you think, I need to go out. I need to find where the action is. I need to get out there and circulate.

Find a date or find some companions and have happy hour or do something. You don't just want to sit and read a book or vacuum the carpet or something. Do your week's worth of washing on Friday night.

You have this sort of youthful urge to get out and see what's happening. Well, you want to go out and stand generally in the way of sinners. People don't say, gee, I wonder if the church has got a Friday night Bible class I could go to.

It's generally, you know, that gal used to sing that song, I like the nightlife. I want to get out and boogie. Boy, that tells you how old I'm getting to be.

Anyway, standing in the path of sinners. You were walking. You were making progress.

But now you kind of spiraled to a stop and you stopped in the wrong place. Standing in the path

of sinners. And, of course, what happens when you stand in the path? I'm constantly reminded that pathways need to be clear.

If I drop a bunch of stuff in the middle where I need to walk or if something falls over in the garage and my little pathway is through these large stacks of stored effluvia out there, if I can't move around in it, I am stopped. Well, if you stand in someone's path, what do they do? They bump into you. And you have interaction with them.

You have conversation. You get pushed in their direction. Have you ever tried standing in the path of people leaving a movie theater? Have you ever stood in the path of someone leaving a concert? We went to some of these Gaither concerts and the arena is just packed during the breaks.

You can just kind of stand still and be carried by the flow and the press of humanity there. You cannot stand for very long in the path of sinners without being bumped and jostled and getting into converse and diffusivities. So what happens? You wind up sitting in the seat of the scornful.

Now remember that for meals and for visitation and hospitality, what did people in the ancient Near East do? They didn't come into a living room where there are chairs and divans and ottomans and couches and things. It's like you see in the movies where you go into a guy's tent and there are pillows and carpets laying all around and people would recline. When did they sit in a seat? Sitting in a chair was an authority function.

There were chairs at the city gates. There were chairs in the throne room of a palace. And to sit in a chair was sort of to be enthroned.

And this is a place of exerting authority and rendering judgment and passing sentence like the Bema in the Greek world. Archeologists have uncovered some of these Bemas in different towns in the Greek and Roman world and you can still see these elevated platforms where there would be a chair. The judge is not going to recline up here on this marble pillar on one elbow and say, bring me the next case.

Bring me the next victim. Let me find out if he's a guilty rascal or not. They sat in a chair.

So when it says sit in the seat, he doesn't say recline in the company of or share a meal with. He says sit in the seat of the scornful. What did the scornful do? One of the quickest ways to tell that we have departed, a lot of times we don't really notice that we've kind of strayed off the path and that we're bumping into a lot of sinners and getting kinetic energy from them.

But one of the telltale signs that we have strayed from the path is that we develop this attitude of superiority and this judgmental attitude that says I sure do see the flaw in that person's operation. I sure can tell where that person fouled up. And this idea of scorn, sitting in the seat, this is the scorn that renders judgment.

This is the scorn that sees the flaw and finds the guilt and the failure and the weakness and is

intent on passing sentence on it. It is important for us to discern. We don't want to be coming up with sinners and saying, well, who knows, maybe they're right and I'm wrong.

Let's not think about that too much. Let's hail fellow well met. Let's be ecumenical.

Let's have fellowship. Let's unite and build up together. The Word of God says we are to be smart and to depart from iniquity and touch not the unclean thing.

Well, if you're going to depart iniquity and touch not the unclean thing, you have to be able to identify it. And to do that we have to discern. The line is crossed between discerning and judging when not only have we identified something and recognized it to be erroneous or flawed or a failure, but we decide that we will pass, that we will render a verdict of guilty and we will pass sentence.

We become not only discerners, but we become those who judge and who then implement the sentence. I will penalize this person for their failure. I will assassinate their character verbally.

I will cut down their standing amongst others. I will talk about them. I will get others to unite in condemnation or in ridicule or in scorn, sitting in the seat of the scornful.

We started out with momentum, walking in the light. We stray, and as soon as we get out of the light, the divine energy that impels us down the straight road through the narrow gate leaves, and before long we're going to be standing in the way of sinners. And one of two things will happen.

This passage says, sit in the seat of the scornful. But if you continue to stand in the way of sinners, you will begin to walk in the way of sinners and you'll be on the broad road going through the wide gate that leads to destruction. But this is actually an optimistic psalm because it says the man is blessed who does not do these things, who recognizes that for the failure that it is and avoids it.

His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night. It is our time of meditation that preserves us from the walking and the standing and the sitting detailed in this first verse. Notice, it does not say his delight is in the law of the Lord and to his law he listens day and night.

I used to think, well you know, tape a day keeps the devil away. If I hear a Bible class every day, I can look back and say I've got this unbroken string of days where I've studied the Word of God and taken good notes and listened to the teaching of the Bible so my spiritual life is healthy. That is not the case.

You can be listening every day. You can be a professor in a seminary. You can be a student in a seminary.

You can be playing Bible class all day long. The Word of God does not say to the law he listens

day and night. It is delighting in it and meditating in it.

Delighting to think about its application. Trying to remember, and we're going to see something about that here shortly. This man who can see the difference between the light and the darkness will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season.

Notice, it doesn't say brings forth fruit. Brings forth its fruit. There is a suffix on the word fruit here in Hebrew.

Brings forth its fruit. We are not all apple trees, and we're not all orange trees. We're not all peaches.

We're not all figs or olives. The tree brings forth its fruit. And one of the mistakes we make is looking around and seeing somebody else's fruit and saying I wonder how come I'm not doing that.

I wonder if I should be doing what that person's doing. Look at the fruit in that person's life. If I feel bad, I'm a failure.

I'm not doing enough. And we can get unwittingly led into righteousness by works or spirituality by works because we say that person just all the time seems to be talking to people and every other week they seem to lead someone to the Lord. I haven't led anyone to the Lord.

Look at that person how helpful in their hospitality and they have a knack for knowing the right thing at the right time. I need to be doing that. And we start feeling guilty and depressed because we're not doing that.

Or look at that person. It just seems like everything they touch in this particular area turns to gold and I need to try to do that. We can certainly be encouraged to love and good works by one another.

We can speak the truth to one another in love. And you do see things. I will never forget an individual in my family and I was impressed as a young man with the fact that he was a listener.

Even though I knew he had very strong convictions about the Word of God and that he disagreed with me and I was in seminary and of course I was just loaded all six cylinders, both barrels. I was ready to unload. He asked me a question and then prepared to sit for a while.

Actually, it's kind of still that way. But the thing that impressed me and if I have gotten any better in that area, one of the reasons is I was struck by the fact that this man, although I knew his convictions were just as strong as mine, was so gracious. He would ask questions and actually listen and process the answers.

You know how you get in a discussion sometimes and you can tell the person is just waiting for you to finish so that they can unload their view. And all of us have a tendency to do this. But I

thought it was a great example and an attribute worthy of emulation to try to be a good listener and seriously consider the point of view that someone presents who disagrees or understands things differently.

And it's something I have tried more or less unsuccessfully to cultivate. But that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit.

We each have a gift of our own. We have opportunities in areas where we can bear fruit. For some it might be child raising, child training.

For others it might just be doing a good job in the family area. For others it might be comfort and encouragement for our spouse. For others it might be doing a really good job in the business world and manifesting the light of God in the evil swamp, putrefying effluvia, I've used that word twice already, that constitutes the business world.

There is no easier place to get drawn into evil than the business world. It is just a sinkhole because the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil and it perpetrates itself and penetrates a lot of areas in business. It is really difficult to be godly in business because you're constantly being pressed to compromise.

You're constantly being pressed to do what everybody else does because it's accepted, it's commonplace. Those of us who have worked for ourselves or are working for ourselves know this to be true. But it says bears its fruit.

Whatever our area of opportunity is, it's our fruit. It's not somebody else's fruit. And that little suffix, it's a single stroke in the Hebrew, carries a lot of meaning.

The tree that is planted by the rivers of water doesn't bear somebody else's fruit. It bears its own fruit in its own season. There is a time for everything.

There's a purpose. We talked about that in Ecclesiastes throughout the book, but especially in Chapter 3. There is a time and a season. There is a kairos and a kranos.

There are points of time, like punctiliar ariests, and then there are processes and things that go on. We talked about kairos and kranos when Jesus tells the disciples in Acts 1, it is not for you to know the specifics of the times and seasons. But he also told his disciples, you can interpret the agricultural seasons.

You look at the sky and see that it's red. You look at the fields and see that they're ripe for harvest. Can you not discern your own times? We may not know the specifics of things that God has in his own wisdom set and determined, the time of the Lord's return, the time of our own death, the time when we may be moving or when different things may happen.

But there are things we do discern, and we bear our fruit in our season. How many months of a

year does a tree bear its fruit, typically? Most trees bear fruit for maybe a month or two at most, don't they? And the other ten months of the year, they're doing other things. They are shedding off useless blossoms that have withered.

They're getting rid of leaves. They're being tossed and blown about like we had a giant storm last night with hail, and there's leaves and little branches all over the area. Things that are dead wood, things that are not healthy are stripped away.

They draw nourishment from the ground. They draw and create new wood, and the sap flows. The health of the tree is the issue for ten months of the year so that in the bearing season or the fruiting season, they can bear their fruit.

And the tree that is planted by the rivers of the water improves its health twelve months out of the year, but it will bear its fruit in its season. Sometimes we think, well, I don't see any immediate fruit at the moment. I don't see where things are really going well, or nothing seems to be happening.

I'm just listening to the Word of God and trying to get through my days. That's fine. Most of the time, that's what a tree does.

It just inhales and exhales, and when the time is right, in God's time and in God's season, it will bear its fruit in its season. It's very, very emphatic here. Its leaf does not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper.

And you see how it seamlessly slides from the picture back to the man. He is like a tree that is planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf does not wither, and whatever he does shall prosper. There's a little inclusio there.

You start out talking about the man, you talk about the tree, and then you return to the man. Whatever he does shall prosper. Now, whatever he does.

John the Baptist preached against Herod and Herodias. Did he prosper? He became a felon. He was imprisoned.

His head was chopped off. Did he prosper? Jesus Christ was perfect, did all the will of God, the greatest teacher of the word that ever lived. Not a word out of place.

Did he prosper? Well, he was wildly unpopular at the end and was crucified. The prophets who lived in caves and holes in the ground, driven out of society, sawn into, hounded, and their blood spilled from one end of Israel to the other. Did they prosper? It kind of depends on your definition of prosperity, doesn't it? In God's definition of prosperity, Jesus said, Of man born of woman there is none greater than John the Baptist.

I would call that prosperity. I don't care how many times they cut your head off. If God says, you're the greatest of your age, there's none greater, that to me is prosperity.

And I would imagine that John the Baptist will have a manifest prosperity throughout the millennial kingdom and on into the kingdom of the Father throughout the eternal future. Although he may seem to have had a setback or two in this life, he prospered. The ungodly are not so.

They are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment. Notice we had some standing going on and some judging going on back in the first verse, didn't we? Standing in the way of sinners and sitting in the seat of the scornful? The ungodly man sits and judges others.

Well, guess what? He's not going to stand in the day of judgment either. He doesn't stand when he's judging others. He's sitting in the seat of those who have a scornful attitude.

Well, that's sort of a tongue-in-cheek thing. He's not going to stand in the day when he is the object of judgment either. Sinners will not stand in the congregation of the righteous.

They stand in the way of sinners. This man who walks in the counsel of the ungodly and stands in the way of sinners. Well, he will not stand in the congregation of the righteous.

What does that mean? When those believers are admitted into the kingdom and into the fellowship of Christ during his thousand-year rule, these will be outside looking in. They will not stand with the congregation of the righteous. They will be outside the camp as those who are defiled were treated in Israel.

Because, verse 6, the Lord knows the way of the righteous. And, of course, that way is path. It's the same word translated path in verse 1. The way of the righteous, the path of the righteous, the path of the ungodly will perish.

It pretty well speaks for itself. Well, this is something to think about because we are engaged in a spiritual conflict. And this Memorial Day weekend, as we think about those who have engaged in conflict, who have even given their lives, and I think just as much about those who survived.

I'm not sure that although we respect and honor those who die in combat, there was no less dedication and no less professionalism and no less willingness on those who didn't take a bullet or who were not blown up and who did survive and come back to contribute to society, and we honor them equally. But if you think about it, and I'm transitioning now from our Scripture reading to our lesson, even as I seem to be diverging, we, in my lifetime and in recent years, when we talk about Memorial Day, what war do we most often focus on? WWII, right? We think about World War II because that's the aging veterans and by far the most numerous. Korea gets a little bit shorter shrift, and Vietnam never was that popular, and we think about the Vietnam veterans and give them a nod.

But really, the big war was World War II. And Memorial Day, we always go back. You see the VFW guys wheeling around now and remembering their fallen comrades and going back to Omaha Beach and that kind of thing.

But I would like to take our reminiscence back about 100 years or 80 years before that to the Civil War. This book, which as J.D. Sumner used to say, I hold in my precious right hand, this book is called Christ in the Camp. It is by Dr. J. William Jones.

He was a chaplain during the Civil War. This book was published in 1887. And this is one of those that they cranked out back in 1887.

It's a little bit fragile. But as you can see, it is quite thick. This is a book of some 600, over 600 pages.

And it is nothing but Christianity in the Confederate Army, specifically the Army of Northern Virginia and then a few notices of other armies. But he was in the Army of Northern Virginia, which, depending on how much you know about the Civil War, you know that that is actually the army of which General Lee was the chief. But I would like to read you just a little bit from his chapter on General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, Stonewall Jackson, to give you an idea of what is truly worth remembering on Memorial Day.

Let us go some bright Sabbath morning to that cluster of tents in the grove across the Massaponax not far from Hamilton's Crossing. Seated on the rude logs or on the ground may be seen 1,500 or 2,000 men with upturned faces, eagerly drinking in the truths of the gospel. That reverent worshipper that kneels in the dust during prayer or listens with sharpened attention and moist eyes as the preacher delivers his message is our beloved Commander-in-Chief, General R.E. Lee.

That devout worshipper who sits at his side, gives his personal attention to the seating of the multitude and looks so supremely happy as he sees the soldiers thronging to hear the gospel and listens so attentively to the preaching is Stonewall Jackson. Those wreaths and stars which cluster around are worn by some of the most illustrious generals of that army and all through the congregation the stars and bars mingle with the rough garb of the unknown heroes of the rank and file who never quail amid the leaden and iron hail of battle but are not ashamed to tremble under the power of God's truth. I need not say that this is Jackson's headquarters and the scene I have pictured is one of frequent occurrence.

He talks about Reverend B.T. Lacey who was General Jackson's personal chaplain but he himself says on one occasion I called at Jackson's headquarters and found him just going in to a prayer meeting which he was accustomed to hold. I gladly accepted his invitation to attend and shall never forget the power, comprehensiveness and tender pathos of the prayer he made during that delightful prayer meeting. Only a few days before the battle of Chancellorsville I had the privilege in company with several brother chaplains of dining with him at his mess and of lingering for an hour of most delightful converse in his tent.

Military matters were scarcely alluded to and then he would quickly change the topic but we fully discussed questions pertaining to the promotion of religion in the camps, how to secure more chaplains and to induce pastors to come as missionaries to the soldiers and kindred

topics and then we got on the subject of personal piety, the obstacles to growth and grace in the army, the best means of promoting it, etc. And as the great soldier talked earnestly and eloquently from a full heart I had to lay aside my office as teacher in Israel and be content to sit at the feet of this able theologian, this humble, earnest Christian and learn of him lessons in the divine life. More than almost any man I ever met, he accepted fully the precious promises of God's word, walked by a living faith in Jesus and was guided by the star of hope as he trod firmly the path of duty.

How far the glorious revivals with which we were favored were in answer to the prayers and in blessing on the efforts of Stonewall Jackson and to what extent his influence was blessed to individuals, eternity alone can reveal. He goes on to talk about the fact that Lieutenant General Ewell, if you know the Civil War, any at all you know about General Ewell, came to Christ as a result of seeing T.J. Jackson. It says here, At a council of war one night, Jackson had listened very attentively to the views of his subordinates and asked until the next morning to present his own.

As they came away, A.P. Hill laughingly said to Ewell, Well, I suppose Jackson wants time to pray over it. Having occasion to return to his quarters again a short time after, Ewell found Jackson on his knees and heard his prayers for God's guidance in the perplexing movements then before him. The sturdy veteran, Ewell, was so deeply impressed by this incident and by Jackson's general religious character that he said, If that is religion, I must have it.

And in making a profession of faith not long afterward, he attributed his conviction to the influence of Jackson's piety. Since he lived such a life, it was to be expected that he would die a glorious death. In the full tide of his splendid career, just as he was completing what he regarded as the most successful military movement of his life, this of course was the success at the Battle of Chancellorsville, he was shot down by the fire of his own men, who would gladly have yielded up their own lives to save their loved chieftain one single pain.

He bore his sufferings and the amputation of his arm with the utmost Christian fortitude, saying repeatedly that he was perfectly resigned to God's will and would not, if he could, restore the arm, unless assured that it was his Heavenly Father's will. When he seemed better and expected to recover, he spoke freely of being so near death when first wounded and expecting fully to die before a surgeon could reach him. He said that he gave himself up to the hands of his Heavenly Father and was in possession of perfect peace.

Reverend Lacey, the chaplain, relates around this period of expected death, It has been a precious experience to me that I was brought face to face with death and found all was well. This is Jackson talking. I then learned an important lesson, that one who has been the subject of converting grace and is the child of God can, in the midst of severest sufferings, fix his thoughts upon God and heavenly things and derive great comfort and peace.

But the one who has never made his peace with God would be unable to control his mind under such sufferings, so as to understand properly the way of salvation, to repent and believe on

Christ. I felt that if I had neglected the salvation of my soul before, it would have been too late then. He sent a letter to General Lee, talking about the victory at Chancellorsville.

But before he could send it, he got a letter from General Lee in response to an earlier note. General Lee says, I've just received your note informing me that you were wounded. I cannot express my regret at the occurrence.

Could I have directed events? I should have chosen, for the good of the country, to have been disabled in your stead. I congratulate you upon the victory, which is due to your skill and energy. Most truly yours, R.E. Lee, General.

Jackson seemed deeply touched at the generous letter from his chief, but said, after a brief pause, General Lee is very kind, but he should give the glory to God. Afterwards, in talking about this great victory, he said, Our movement yesterday was a great success, I think the most successful military movement of my life, but I expect to receive far more credit for it than I deserve. Most men will think I had planned it all from the first, but it was not so.

I simply took advantage of circumstances as they were presented to me in the providence of God. I feel His hand led me. Let us give Him all the glory.

When he had been removed to the house of Mr. Chandler near Guinea Station and had so far rallied us to feel confident of his recovery, he talked very freely on his favorite religious topics. He requested his chaplain to visit him at 10 o'clock each morning for the reading of scripture and prayer. These seasons were the occasion of much religious conversation in which he unbosomed himself with unusual freedom and candor.

He declared that his faith and hope in his Redeemer were clear. He said he was perfectly willing to die at that time, but believed that his time was not yet come, that his Heavenly Father still had work for him to do in defense of his beloved country, and that until that was completed, he should be spared. During these morning hours, he was delighted to enlarge on his favorite topics of practical religion, which were such as these.

The Christian should carry his religion into everything. I will break at this point to remind you that this is one of the things that I think probably distinguishes what we glean from the Word of God from a lot of what is put out. I think there is such a lack of emphasis on daily faith and the opportunities that God gives us in the small things of life.

But this is something that T.J. Jackson understood. He says, Christianity makes man better in any lawful calling. It equally makes the general a better commander and the shoemaker a better mechanic.

In the case of the cobbler or the tailor, for instance, religion will produce more care in promising work, more punctuality and more fidelity in executing it from conscientious motives. And these homely examples were fair illustrations of its value in more exalted functions. So, prayer aids any man in any lawful business, not only by bringing down the divine blessing,

which is its direct and prime object, but by harmonizing his own mind and heart.

How many times have we talked about prayer as a way of cycling the Word of God through our souls? And it's something General Jackson understood. He said, not only does it bring the primary request before God, but it harmonizes his own mind and heart. The prayer of an army at the critical hour, it calmed his perplexities, moderated his anxieties, steadied the scales of judgment, and thus preserved him from exaggerated and rash conclusions.

Again, he urged that every act of man's life should be a religious act. He recited with much pleasure the ideas of Doddridge, where he pictured himself as spiritualizing every act of his daily life, as thinking when he washed himself of the cleansing blood of Calvary, as praying while he put on his garments that he might be clothed with the righteousness of the saints, as endeavoring while he was eating to feed upon the bread of heaven. Does that remind us of Psalm 1? In that law, did he meditate day and night? General Jackson now also enforced his favorite dogma that the Bible furnished men with a rule for everything.

If they would search, he said, they would find a precept, an example, or a general principle applicable to every possible emergency of duty, no matter what was a man's calling. There, the military man might find guidance for every exigency. Turning to Lieutenant Smith, he asked him, smiling, Can you tell me where the Bible gives generals a model for their official reports of battles? He answered, laughing, that it never entered his mind to think of looking for such a thing in the Scriptures.

Nevertheless, said the general, there are such and excellent models, too. Look, for instance, at the narrative of Joshua's battle with the Amalekites. There you have one.

It has clearness, brevity, fairness, modesty, and it traces the victory to its right source, the blessing of God. As he gradually grew worse and his physicians and friends became alarmed about his condition, he was calmed, resigned, even joyous at the prospect. Noting the sadness of his loving wife, he said to her tenderly, I know you would gladly give your life for me, but I am perfectly resigned.

Do not be sad. I hope I may yet recover. Pray for me, but always remember in your prayers to use the petition, Thy will be done.

When he saw the number of surgeons who were called in, he said to his medical director, Dr. Hunter McGuire, I see from the number of physicians that you consider my condition dangerous, but I thank God that if it is His will, I am ready to go. When his wife informed him that the doctors thought his recovery very doubtful, he was silent for a moment and then said, It will be infinite gain to be translated to heaven. Later on, on that beautiful Sabbath day, he was informed that he could scarcely live till night.

He engaged for a moment in intense thought and then replied, Very good, very good. It is all right. Dr. McGuire thus concludes a deeply interesting paper on the wounding and death of

Jackson.

He tried to comfort his almost heartbroken wife and told her he had a good deal to say to her, but he was too weak. Colonel Pendleton came into the room about one o'clock and he asked him, Who's preaching at headquarters today? When he was told that the whole army was praying for him, he replied, Thank God. They are very kind.

He said, It is the Lord's day. My wish is fulfilled. I have always desired to die on Sunday.

His mind now began to fail and wander and he frequently talked as if in command upon the field, giving orders in his old way. Then the scene shifted and he was at the mess table in conversation with members of his staff, now with his wife and child, now at prayers with his military family. Occasionally, intervals of return of his mind would appear and during one of them, I offered him some brandy and water, but he declined it, saying, It will only delay my departure and do no good.

I want to preserve my mind if possible to the last. About half past one, he was told that he had but two hours to live and he answered again feebly but firmly, Very good. It is all right.

A few moments before he died, he cried out in his delirium, Order AP Hill to prepare for action. Pass the infantry to the front rapidly. Tell Major Hawks, Then stopped, leaving the sentence unfinished.

Presently, a smile of ineffable sweetness spread over his pale face and he said quietly and with an expression as if of relief, Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees. And then, without pain or the least struggle, his spirit passed from earth to the God who gave it. In fine, Jackson took Jesus as his savior, his guide, his great exemplar, the captain of his salvation, whom he followed with the unquestioning obedience of the true soldier.

Well, we too fight as soldiers but not in a battle in the physical realm. We face challenges as believers here on earth that are not, while they have physical components, are of a spiritual nature. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but the principalities and powers and rulers and this is our opportunity to learn and to grow and to prevail in the conflict that is allotted to us.

Each tree is planted at some point along that river of life. Each tree has its season and its fruit and its opportunity to bear. And if there's one thing that we remember during this Memorial Day, I hope it will be that truth, that principle.

The tree does not have to strain and stress and exert itself. Everything it has, everything it is, has been given to it by God and yet, just by sinking its roots into the soil and partaking of that water, it lives, it grows, it prevails and it bears its fruit and that's our great opportunity. Well, this is a good place to pause and take our break.

When we come back, we're going to pick up our study in Exodus beginning at chapter 11, verse

