

95-08-27Mark

...minds and our hearts and transform us and renew us and equip us for every good work. Shall we pray? Father, we thank You for this day. We thank You for the many ways that You have blessed us and provided for all of our needs.

We thank You for the complete perfection of Your provision and of Your plan. We know that from our human perspective, we can't see very far into the future. We cannot tell the ways in which You are going to provide sometimes.

We can't tell the turns that our path in life will take. But the one sure, constant rock in our soul is the knowledge that You are faithful, that You are consistent, that You have provided in eternity past for everything we need in this life. We thank You for that.

We thank You for the confidence that it gives us, for the encouragement that it is to us, whether we experience days of sunshine or days of overcast. We pray that as we continue through this life, that these things will be a source of encouragement and comfort to us. We pray that as we see the Lord Jesus Christ and the disciples at Gethsemane this morning, that God the Holy Spirit will take these things and use them in our souls.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. They have a series on the Arts and Entertainment Network.

I don't see a whole lot of television, but Arts and Entertainment claims that they are time well spent. So I hope that they're right. I do see some programs on A&E.

One of the programs they have is hosted by Danny Glover. It's called Civil War Journal. They had a very interesting segment on that just this past week that dealt with General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, Stonewall Jackson.

The part that he played in the Civil War on the side of the South, the tremendous insight and genius that he had as a leader. He was, by the way, an artilleryman, of which I am inordinately proud. But Jackson was the right arm of General Robert E. Lee.

In the midst of battle, as he returned through his own lines, he was shot by his own men. His left arm was shattered up near the shoulder and had to be amputated. Of course, the great danger in those days was infection and pneumonia after a wound of this nature.

As General Jackson lay teetering on the brink between life and death, he received a note from Robert E. Lee. It was very short. It said, You have lost your left arm.

I have lost my right. Of course, most scholars of the Civil War believe that that was the turning point in the war and that with the loss of Jackson, the South lost whatever hope they had of surviving as a separate entity in the Civil War. But in the records of what Jackson did up until the point of his death, one of the things that's noteworthy is he was not brilliant in school.

When he went to West Point, he started near the bottom of his class. It was not by the kind of genius that makes academics easy that he was able to rise to near the top of his class during his four years. It was by diligence and hard work.

He would stoke the stove in his room so that it would glow brightly after lights out and he could study by the glow of the coals to try to catch up. He had not had a real good preparation before coming to West Point. He worked hard.

He worked very long and diligently. He prepared himself at school. He rose from the bottom third of the class to graduate 18th or 19th, I think, in his class of several hundred.

His career was marked by the same diligence and the same fiendish dedication to preparation. When he took command of his brigade, which came to be known as the Stonewall Brigade in the Civil War, he was initially known as a very hard general. He marched his men and marched them and marched them so that an 18 or 20-mile march in a day became customary.

And the men took sort of a perverse pride. Initially they complained and cried the blues, as all military men have since time began, about the harshness of this type of leadership. But it hardened them and it prepared them and it trained them.

Jackson was able to fight battles and win engagements with the Union armies outnumbered two to one, three to one, four to one, and often five to one. The reason was that his men were prepared. His men were trained.

They were ready when the engagement took place. And the Union generals could not figure out how to fight Jackson because his men were so quick. You could never count on him being where the last intelligence report had located him.

When you would send a patrol or send a couple of brigades to go attack him, he would no longer be there. He would be 19 or 20 miles away attacking your flank and rolling up your supply lines. And with a greatly outnumbered force, he continued to jab and to poke and to punch and to roll back the Union armies.

And General Lee came to rely on him because of that tremendous capability that he had. He had that capability through preparation. When it was time for the battle, his men were ready.

Now this is something that obviously applies in many areas of life. When the crisis hits, when the pressure is on, that's not the time to suddenly scurry around and find resources. It isn't the time to begin to train or begin to prepare.

When the crisis hits and the pressure is on, we need those resources. We need to have that preparation under our belt. This is true in the human realm.

It's true even more so in the spiritual realm. In our study of Mark, we have seen that Jesus Christ

has focused the last part of his ministry specifically on the disciples. He has not gone out and done so much in the way of public ministry.

He goes places and doesn't announce his presence. He's investing his time and his teaching in the disciples. He's trying to prepare them for what is to come.

He has begun to tell them that he's going to be arrested and suffer and die. That the sheep are going to be scattered when the shepherd is struck, as we'll see this morning. So turn with me to Mark chapter 14, because he has told the disciples what's coming up.

Not only in the near future, but he has also given them the warning that we saw last time about the latter days and Daniel's 70th week. And he concludes that section by saying, Be ready and don't be taken by surprise. I have told you all things.

And you'll remember back in chapter 13, verses 32 through 37. He says, Be ready, you don't know when this test is going to come. The day and the hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son, but the Father only.

Take heed, watch and pray. You do not know when the time is. It's like a man going to a far country who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to each his work and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming. In the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning. Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

And what I say to you, I say to all, watch. Now this word watch has come over into our language, into English, as a name for a young man. Gregory.

Gregory is from the Greek Gregoreo. And that's the word that's used here when it says watch. It's in the present imperative, which means don't just watch for a little while and stop.

Be constantly watching. Keep on watching is the sense. Now skip down.

We know that after this, the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread take place. We're familiar with Jesus and the disciples going to the upper room and partaking of that last supper and the new covenant in Jesus' blood that is symbolized in that bread and that cup that they share. We know from the Gospel of John that Jesus did a lot of teaching in that upper room discourse.

Following that, following the departure of Judas and so forth, we find down in Mark chapter 14, beginning at verse 26, they sang a hymn and they went out to the Mount of Olives. Now this is significant. Keep in mind the idea of preparation.

Jesus has been teaching the disciples. Jesus has been training the disciples. He's given them two practice missions out among the people and brought them back.

He has spent the entire evening on this particular night teaching. Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me.

He has painted for them that future hope of His return. He has stated clearly that He must be arrested, must die, will rise again. Now they partake in this ritual which Jesus invests with new meaning.

The Passover had been an institution in Israel. But Jesus converts it and takes those elements and makes something new out of it. He says, this is a new covenant.

This do in remembrance of Me. He says, remember, keep these in your mind. So this reminds us a lot of what we do in church, doesn't it? We come together.

We understand the importance of being prepared. We come to church and are taught. We take communion at church.

We sing a hymn at church or two. We do all of these things, don't we? Just like the disciples did. We follow this pattern in our attempt to be prepared, in our attempt to be ready.

This is what the disciples have done. And in verse 27 of chapter 14, Jesus warns them. He says, all of you will be made to stumble.

This is our old friend, skandalizo. You will all be scandalized. The skandalos, as you may recall, was the stick that held up the trap or the snare for a bird.

And you would trip that trap and capture the animal. You could trip that snare and cause an animal to stumble and fall and snare him and keep him from making his forward progress. And this word came to be used for any sort of an upset to normal forward progress.

We've seen that the people were scandalized by Jesus' teaching. They were caused to stumble. It inhibited their forward progress and their happy frame of mind.

Now Jesus says, you are going to be scandalized, disciples. You are going to be caused to stumble because of me this night. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee. Once again, Jesus reinforces the pattern that we have seen so many times. What reinforces our faith? We know that faith is taking the promises of God, the statements of God, the character of God, claiming that in a concrete way and making it a reality in our soul.

What is it that helps sustain our faith? It's hope. Hope is the motivation for faith. Hope is the motivation that keeps us adhering to that narrow path.

Every time you see Jesus encouraging faith, you will see Him offer this hope. When He says, I'm going to be arrested, Peter, Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. And then what does He say? And afterward, when you return, encourage your brothers.

Jesus suggests that there's a period that comes after the test, after the trial of faith. That's what He does here. After I have been raised, I will go before you into Galilee.

It's a hope. It implies a concrete future. It says that after this period of tribulation, after you are scattered, you're going to be regathered with me in Galilee.

Now notice what Peter says in verse 29. Peter said to Him, even if all are scandalized, yet I will not be. All will be made to stumble, but I will not be.

Now, what is Peter looking at here? Is Peter looking at what the Lord has just said about arrest and death and resurrection? What is Peter looking at? We know that there are three areas when we get our mind off of the Lord and off of the objective things of the faith. There are three areas of subjectivity. Eyes on self, eyes on people, eyes on circumstances.

Anytime we are diverted from the path, we will find our eyes on one of those three things. We become preoccupied with self. We get into self-pity or whatever.

Or we look at others and we start comparing ourselves to others. What's Peter looking at here? Others. Others will fall.

Others will stumble, but not me. What was the nature of the discussion that they had earlier on the road? Who will be the greatest? When you study grammar and literature and English and all that sort of thing, you find out that we have words that are called comparatives and we have words that are called superlatives. Great, greater, greatest.

If you say someone is great, that's an objective measure. When you say greater, you're comparing them to someone else. When you say greatest, you're putting them at the top of that list of all the other people.

What's the problem that the disciples have here? Jesus Christ is in the final week of his earthly life. He is facing the greatest test that any person has ever faced in the universe, in eternity and history. And the disciples have their eyes on each other.

Who is going to be the greatest? Who is going to stumble and who is not? Who is right and who is wrong? Who is better and who is not so good? Subjectivity, eyes on people is the problem. Peter says, All of these may be made to stumble, I will never stumble. Jesus said to him,

Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

But he spoke, Peter, spoke more vehemently, If I have to die with you, I will not deny you. And they all said likewise. We know where this is heading, don't we? Verse 32, They came to a place which is named Gethsemane.

And he said to his disciples, Sit here while I pray. This place called Gethsemane is at the foot of the Mount of Olives. There is a garden which is there to this day that is identified as the place where Jesus and the disciples went on this occasion.

They apparently regularly visited this particular spot. If you can get a copy of Biblical Archaeology Review for the current month, July-August, there is a very good article in there about Gethsemane. And it talks about the fact that not only is there a garden there, but there is also a cave.

And that cave, which is just to the right of the tomb of the Virgin Mary, which, by the way, did not appear until about 600 A.D. I don't know where Mary was in that first 500 years. But they have a nice, like everything else, there's a big church and a basilica and all kinds of icons and gilded things there. But if you get past that and go down a corridor, there is a not-often-visited, not-well-known site, which is to one side of this garden area.

And it's a cave. In this cave, of course, they've also built a chapel and have done all of these things. But back in Jesus' day, this was the location of an olive press.

And there's a notch in the wall at just the right height to put a huge beam in. And underneath where this beam extends would have been a large, round stone vat. The olives would be put into this vat in baskets.

After the first pressing where the good, best oil that was given to the sanctuary was taken off, these partially crushed olives would be put in baskets and put in this round stone enclosure. The beam had a large millstone type affair that would come right down inside that round receptacle. The beam extended on past it, and great weights would be hung on the other end of the beam.

And so you can see there would be a lever effect of this weight pressing the stone down into the olive press and pushing out the remaining oil in these olives. It would come through the sides of the basket, would drain down a trough, and be captured for use. This is all in this cave.

The Hebrew word for oil presses, if you talk about it in the plural, is got-shamanim. Got meaning press and shamanim meaning oils. Got-shamanim, if you say it fast enough, and if you're a Greek and don't speak Hebrew or Aramaic, becomes Gethsemane.

Got-shamanim. This cave is probably the location where Jesus went. There are some details that help us come to this conclusion.

You may recall that later on this evening, Peter is going to gather with other people around a fire in the courtyard to warm himself because it was a chilly night. You also recall that there is a man who flees when the arrest takes place, clad only in a linen garment. And the garment is seized, and he runs away with no clothes on at all.

So we know two things. It was a chilly night, and yet there were people there who were lightly clothed. Clothed perhaps for sleeping.

It's very probable that this was a place where the disciples would stay because there was shelter. Perhaps the man who owned the olive grove and owned the oil press believed in Jesus Christ. He may have allowed them to stay there, but it had shelter.

And anyone who has camped out overnight in the Middle East, in that side of the Mediterranean Sea, can tell you that at this time of year, if you're outside, it gets very cold and very damp. It's unlikely that the disciples and the Lord would have been outside sleeping under the stars. They were probably inside this enclosure.

So Jesus takes them to this place called Gethsemane. By the way, we often talk about the garden, but the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke never mention a garden. There is a word in the Gospel of John that is translated garden, but it basically means an enclosed area of any type.

It's not really the best word for garden. That's another thing that tells us that perhaps this is where they went. Anyway, He took the disciples to Gethsemane, and He said to them, Sit here while I pray.

And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. And He said to them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.

This word for exceedingly sorrowful is a very full word in Greek. You may know that the word for wolf, the scientific word, is lupo. We have a disease called lupus, which is from this same word.

But lupo means wolf, and the wolf is named that because this is a word for sorrow, and wolves bay, and they sound so mournful and sorrowful. This word that says Jesus was sorrowful is perilupo. Peri means to be around.

We get the word perimeter from this. Jesus says, My soul is surrounded by sorrow. I am encompassed on every side by sorrow.

He's exceedingly sorrowful. Deeply distressed. And what does He say? He tells the disciples something.

Stay here and watch. This is our friend Gregoreo, the same one we saw in chapter 13. Stay here and remain alert.

Jesus now goes a little further in verse 35, and He fell on the ground, and He prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me.

Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will. Then He came and found them sleeping, and He said to Peter, Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch? Could you not, Gregoreo, for one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Again He went away and prayed and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough.

The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise and let us be going.

See, my betrayer is at hand. I would submit to you that the battle was lost as far as Peter and the disciples are concerned, not at Jesus' arrest, not in the temple courtyard when Peter denied the Lord three times, but this threefold failure in the garden. Jesus' command was to watch and pray, and there is a threefold failure.

There is, in essence, a threefold denial right here. Long before it expresses itself in a verbal way in the temple courtyard in Peter's mouth, it finds its expression here in the garden. What was Jesus' command? Watch and pray.

You may recall in our study of Colossians, I think it was in chapter 4, we had an entire section entitled Watch and Pray. You may recall that we went and saw the link between alertness and prayer. Our prayer should be an expression of that alertness.

Jesus knows that the greatest test of His life is coming up, and what does He do? He prays. When we realize that we are in a testing situation, that we're facing pressure, a part of the resource that God has given to us to cope with that is prayer. And we know that prayer is the place where we express our faith.

We rehearse in our minds before the Lord the promises of God. This is what Moses did. Go back and read Moses' dialogue with the Lord when he's leading the children of Israel.

Every time the Lord puts a great deal of pressure and He says, Stand away Moses, I'm going to destroy these people. What does Moses do in his conversation with the Lord? He reminds God of things that God Himself has said. He says, Lord, you can't do this.

You have said that you're going to manifest your glory in these people. You can't wipe them out. You promised to be with us and not forsake us.

That's a wonderful model for prayer because it is not for God's benefit. God doesn't need to be reminded of His promises, but sometimes we do. And our prayer and our conversation with the Lord is an opportunity to bring to mind those promises, to claim them, to be comforted in our soul as we talk with God and rehearse those things in our soul that we already know.

That's what Jesus is doing here. He states a principle of the Word of God. The very first thing that He says, All things are possible for you.

Jesus is thinking about the character of God the Father. That's the basis upon which He prays. He says, Father, everything is possible for you and based on that I'm asking you to let this cup pass me by.

Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done. But what are the disciples doing? The disciples have fallen asleep. What is the antithesis? How far away can you get from alertness? Sleep.

It's the opposite end of the spectrum, isn't it? It's the contrast that the Bible makes all the way through. Jesus has talked about this and used this very same word in this latter part of His ministry. Turn back to Matthew 24.

Matthew 24. Down around verse 42. Jesus has talked about this same thing that He just reminded the disciples of.

No one knows the day or the hour. The angels, only the Father knows. And He says in verse 42, after reminding them, the two men will be in the field.

One will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill. One will be taken and the other left.

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. And this passage, unfortunately, has been abused to refer to the rapture and so forth. But this is talking about the end of Daniel's 70th week.

This is talking about the second coming when Jesus returns to those Jewish believers that have come to faith during the tribulation period. And when Jesus comes and establishes His kingdom, He's going to purge the earth. And we like to think that one is taken and one is left and that one that is taken goes up in the rapture.

But that's not what Jesus is talking about. Two will be in the field. Two will be grinding and so forth.

The one that is taken is the one that is eradicated from the earth. The unbelievers are purged and

the believers are left to enter into the millennial kingdom and enjoy the promises that God gave to Old Testament saints. Everyone who comes to faith in that 70th week, as we have reviewed recently, is an Old Testament saint and inherits the Old Testament promises.

How do they inherit? They inherit them in the millennial kingdom. That's when God fulfills them. That's what the message of Hebrews 11 is.

So those who are left are those who are allowed to go into Christ's thousand year rule in Israel. The ones who are taken weren't ready when the Master came. They were not of the household of faith.

Look also in chapter 25, verse 13. This is even more crucial because now we're not talking about salvation. The ones who are taken and the ones who are left, that's the difference between the saved and the unsaved at the end of the tribulation.

But here in chapter 25, we have the parable of the ten virgins. Five wise and five foolish. Notice, these virgins all bear the identical same relationship to the bride and to the groom, don't they? They have the same status.

It's not their standing. It's not their relationship that's in question. It is their obedience.

It's their watchfulness that is at stake. It's what they do, not who they are, that counts. And that's important because we're not talking about salvation with the wise and foolish virgins.

We're talking about the same thing that we see in Gethsemane. Watchfulness. Wakefulness.

Alertness. The kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five were foolish.

Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

And at midnight a cry was heard, Behold, the bridegroom is coming. Go out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you. Go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding and the door was shut. Afterward, the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. We have seen over the course of time as we've reviewed many of these stories that Jesus told,

there is a big difference between being denied access to this inner place of light and this inner place of the presence of Jesus Christ and being cast into the lake of fire. That place of outer darkness is loss of reward.

It's believers who were not alert. Notice this slumbering and sleeping is a picture of what happened to nearly all of the Old Testament saints. How many Old Testament saints will be alive at the second coming? Only the few survivors of the tribulation.

Every other Old Testament saint will be asleep and will be raised when Jesus Christ returns at that third of the resurrections. All of these virgins slumber and sleep. When the bridegroom appears, they all arise, don't they? It doesn't say that five of them stayed asleep.

And that's what happens to unbelievers. When the bridegroom returns at the second advent, the unbelievers live not until the thousand years are over and the great white throne of judgment takes place. These five foolish virgins are not unbelievers.

They are believers. They have the same relationship to the groom. They slumber with the five wise virgins and they all rise and they all see the groom return.

But these five foolish virgins are denied access to the celebration of the wedding. And Jesus has told these Jewish believers of the lost house of Israel that many of them will see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom with those from the northeast, south, and west. They will see that happen, but they themselves will be cast out.

An unbeliever is dead. He can't see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sitting down in the kingdom. Believers who lost reward because they did not stay awake, they were not vigilant, they did not watch, lose reward in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

This is a consistent theme and it's one that we have overlooked because we have misinterpreted these. We are too quick to see unbelievers in the teachings of Jesus Christ that were aimed at believers. We'll see this as we go forward.

But you'll notice the contrast here of sleeping and waking, of watchfulness, and of not being prepared. We have seen in Mark 13 the servant in the household. They're all servants.

They're all in the household, but some are ready and some are not. Turn over with me to Acts 20. You recall that the Apostle Paul on his way to Rome stops and in Acts 20 he calls for the elders of the church in Ephesus.

And from Miletus in verse 17 of chapter 20, he's sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. But skip down to verse 26. Paul says to these Ephesian elders, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves, men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Therefore, watch. Gregoreo. The very same command that Jesus Christ gave His disciples, Paul gives to the elders of the Ephesian church.

Watch. Remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone, night and day, with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Notice. Inheritance. Not salvation.

This is reward. This is the opportunity that we have in this life. And this is the same principle that Jesus applied to the Old Testament saints applied to us, the church.

He doesn't say that because you are saved, you have an inheritance. He says, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up and is able to give you an inheritance. Do we want to inherit in the kingdom of Jesus Christ? Do we want to reflect His glory in the eternal future? This is the way.

We've got to pursue God and the Word of His grace. We've got to watch. We've got to be alert and not fall asleep.

Turn over to Ephesians 5, verse 6. Let no one deceive you with empty words, Paul says, to these same Ephesians that he's been talking to in Acts. Same church, same group. Let no one deceive you with empty words.

For because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not be partakers with them. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of light. Now, this is very interesting. This is something that I have learned just in the past few months.

You can be a believer according to Scripture, and yet you can be a partaker with the sons of disobedience. Now, the sons of disobedience are clearly those who wind up in the lake of fire. You can substantiate that from Scripture.

But you can receive the inheritance that belongs to them. We're going to see that as we go forward. But just note here, Paul is talking to believers in the Ephesian church and in verse 7 he says, Do not be partakers with the sons of disobedience.

And this word for partaking is a word that's used when you partake of an inheritance, when you receive a measure. And as a believer, we have a choice. Our inheritance in the kingdom, our inheritance in the eternal future can either be blessing and reward in those things that are mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3, or our inheritance as a believer, as someone with eternal life and relationship with God, our plot of land in the kingdom can be a part of the lake of fire is what the Bible tells us.

Now that's a difficult thing to contemplate, but just keep this passage in mind and we'll see it as we go forward. Notice what he says. You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

This same you that he's telling, don't be a partaker with the sons of disobedience, he says you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

Finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done in secret.

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light. For whatever makes manifest is light. What is it that makes manifest for us? What is the light that keeps us awake and alert? What is our portion in the daylight? Psalm 119.

Out of all of those many verses, there are only two that do not mention this particular thing. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Therefore, he says, awake you who sleep.

Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you life. See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Remember our wise and foolish virgins? It's possible for a believer to walk foolishly.

How can we walk foolishly? We can walk in darkness. We can walk apart from the light. Not as fools, but as wise.

Buying up the time, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. So when we see this command to watch, we want to know how to do it.

Does it just mean be paranoid and look for evil under every bush and be afraid of every new circumstance, that there's some occasion for stumbling in it? How do we fulfill this command that Jesus says He gives to all? What I say to you, I say to all. Watch. How do we do that? How can we all be named Gregory? This is what Paul is telling us.

Attach yourself to the light. Seek the light. Walk in the light.

The light is the revelation of God's character. It's the revelation of God's plan. It's the revelation of

Jesus Christ.

It's God's Word. Now this is important. And you might just note in this connection right above this in Ephesians 5. For this you know, no fornicator, no unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

These are practices that can creep in instead of our spiritual walk. If we're not walking in the light, we will be walking in one of these areas. And we will lose inheritance in the kingdom.

Now the kingdom isn't even an issue for an unbeliever because unbelievers won't be around. Unbelievers don't go into the lake of fire until the great white throne. So the kingdom, reward or loss in the kingdom is not an issue for an unbeliever.

It's an issue for us. It's an issue for believers. People who practice these things have no inheritance.

And just as a quick side note, turn over with me to Revelation 22. In this last part of Revelation, after the millennial kingdom, after the great white throne of judgment, which we see in 20.11, we then have the conditions that will pertain after the millennial kingdom, after the great white throne, after unbelievers have been raised, judged, and cast into the lake of fire. We're past the lake of fire judgment now.

Okay? That's very important. Everyone who's going to the lake of fire is in the lake of fire when we start chapter 21. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

The first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no more sea. Where did some of the dead come from for the great white throne judgment? Death gives up the dead that are in it. Hades and the sea give up the dead that are in them.

You still have a sea for the great white throne judgment. This is after that. There is no more sea.

Everyone is in the lake of fire that's going. That's critically important. Then you have the new Jerusalem coming down and so forth.

And skip down to verse 8 here of chapter 21. Verse 7 says, He who overcomes shall inherit all things. Inheritance.

Not only in the millennial kingdom, but the eternal future kingdom of God that follows. He who overcomes. Remember Revelation 2 and 3. The letters to the seven churches.

To him that overcomes I will grant. He who overcomes shall inherit all things. I will be his God and he shall be my son.

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second

death. Notice it does not say they are cast into it. It says they have their part.

Remember back in Corinthians when Paul says there are some who will be saved yet so as by fire. All of their works are going up in a giant flame. This is that flame.

Their inheritance, the only inheritance they can claim, is the place where all of their fruitless works went, which is the lake of fire. The smoke ascending from that lake is their part. This word meros doesn't mean that that's where they go.

It means that's their inheritance. What kind of inheritance do you want in the millennial kingdom? What kind of inheritance do you want in the kingdom of God in the eternal future? We have a choice. We've got to wake up.

Shake off this sleep that has overcome us and become alert. We've got to recognize that there's a lot on the line in this life. It is not enough to play at Christianity or to play at church or to do like the disciples and get our eyes on one another.

There are huge issues at stake. The glory of God reflected in our lives is at stake. God attaches a lot of importance to this.

Inheritance in the kingdom, inheritance in the eternal future hinges on the decisions that you and I make today, now. Jesus says, I say to you, wake up and watch. Be alert.

I cannot stress to you how important this is. If Jackson's men had known how important it would be for them to march and to shoot and to learn how to be soldiers, they could have done it with two or three times the enthusiasm. Instead, they grumbled and complained and it was only because they had a harsh general that they were prepared for those wonderful battles that have made them immortal in history.

That's our opportunity. We don't know the magnitude. We can't even begin to guess at the magnitude of the issues that hinge on the decisions that we make with each other, the decisions that we make with our spouse, the decisions that we make on a daily basis about what to think and what to say, what priorities to set, the importance that we attach to learning the Word of God and coming to understand God better and more fully.

There is more on the line than we can possibly imagine. Paul says, the sufferings of this life, they seem they loom so large they're not worthy to be compared with the glory that's going to be revealed. This is what's on the line.

Now turn over in Revelation to the next chapter, chapter 22, and look down around verses 14 and 15. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter through the gates of the city. This city doesn't even descend until after the great right throne judgment and the lake of fire judgment is complete and accomplished.

And notice what he's saying. This is after that. Blessed are those who are doing His commandments.

They will have the right to this tree of life. They may enter through the gates of the city. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and whoever loves and practices a lie.

There are people outside the gates of the city. Now the lake of fire is not outside the gates of the city, but there is an area outside that gate. Entering that gate and partaking of that special tree is a privilege that comes to those who do His commandments.

Otherwise, you have to believe in salvation by works. If you think that this is talking about salvation, then look at verse 14. The ones who do His commandments have the right to the tree and the right to enter the gate.

Does our salvation depend upon obedience or does it depend upon faith in Christ? If we know one thing as conservative evangelical Christians, it is that our salvation depends on the work of Christ. Not claimed by works, but by grace, lest any man should boast. So this is based on works, this access.

This is based on what we do after salvation. Jesus says, watch. You might make a note, we don't have time to turn there, but 1 Corinthians 16, 13, Paul tells the Corinthians, watch.

Gregoreo, stand fast in the faith. Be brave. Be strong.

Colossians 4, 2 is the passage that we covered when we studied Colossians. The same command is there. Be diligent in your prayers.

Prayer is an important part of this. We've seen 1 Thessalonians 5 in our recent studies. Watch and be diligent.

You are not of the night and of the darkness. You are of the day, so walk in the light, Paul tells the Thessalonians. Revelation 3, 3 in the letters to the seven churches, Jesus tells the church, watch.

The Son of Man is coming like a thief in the night. And He brings that principle that He taught to Israel over to the church in that passage. We are also to watch.

We don't know when He's coming, but we've got to be alert. In the garden or in the cave at Gethsemane, the disciples weren't ready. When the pressure hit, they were overcome by sleep.

Three times they failed to heed this command and to take advantage of the preparation that Jesus Christ tried to give them. The battle was lost at Gethsemane. The battle was lost at the oil press before they ever got it.

