

02-11-03a Revelation

Let's take a moment as we continue our worship this morning to prepare ourselves specifically for the study of the Word of God, to clear our minds, prepare our hearts, and ensure that God the Holy Spirit has an unrestricted ability to minister these things to our hearts. Shall we pray? Father, we are constantly reminded of the privileged status that we enjoy with you and before you because of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for your compassion and mercy on us in sending him and in saving us through him.

We thank you for his faithfulness and his willingness to conjoin himself with us as human beings and to forever serve as the mediator and the entrance point and the link between ourselves and your glorious presence. We thank you for the gift of your Word and the presence of your Spirit in our souls. We pray that as we study your Word together that we will not fail to see what you have for us, that any scales on our eyes will drop away and any hardness in our heart will melt and the rough places will be made smooth as we endeavor to arrive at a better understanding of our place in your plan, our opportunities, our calling, our responsibility, the upward call that you have issued to us in Christ Jesus.

We pray that you will not only help us to understand but also to remember and to find the truths of your Word prominent in our thinking as we navigate through the daily circumstances of our lives. We ask that you will never let us rest or never let us drop into apathy or indifference but that your Spirit will constantly prod us and remind us so that we will not fall back into perdition but be among those who by faith and patience inherit the promises. We thank you for the nation in which we live, the leadership of our country.

We have an election day coming up this next week and we ask your continued blessing on us nationally and locally that we will continue to enjoy the situation that is brought about through our form of government and our geographic location on the planet. We thank you for the United States of America and for the founders who embodied so much of the truth of your Word into our documents defining our nation. The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the early leadership of our country was very much inspired by a knowledge of your Word and we pray that we will continue to be the beneficiaries of that freedom and opportunity that is guaranteed by the structure of our nation.

Once again we ask your blessing on us. May the spiritual gift of each believer minister to all those present and may each leave with a blessing. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. For our scripture reading this morning turn with me to the book of Hebrews. Hebrews chapter 3 verse 12.

We'll begin in Hebrews 3.12 and move into chapter 4. I personally think there's sort of an unfortunate chapter break here between 3 and 4. Hebrews chapter 3 verse 12 and following. In

the new American Standard Bible this section is subtitled Peril of Unbelief. I would amend that to a more accurate translation of apisteia and say the peril of faithlessness.

Beware brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of faithlessness, apisteia, in departing from the living God. It's important to understand that at the outset. I try to discipline myself to not start expositing and preaching when we're trying to do scripture reading because it's supposed to be a reading.

But it's important I think to recognize the context. This is the letter to the Hebrews. It is a letter written to believers.

It is a challenge to live by faith. The just shall live by faith. Habakkuk 2.4b. And when it says here beware brethren lest there be in any of you.

You would think it would be difficult to miss but it is missed quite often. People see unbelief and they think unbeliever. They think someone who is not saved and is not entered into the family of God.

But if you look carefully we're talking to the brethren and within you an evil heart of faithlessness in departing from the living God. To depart from someplace you have to start there. If you're an unbeliever you need to come to God.

Here are people who start with God and depart. So don't let there be any doubt that we are not referring to any category of the unsaved here. This is a witness to believers.

Beware brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of faithlessness in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called today lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ.

That phrase should resonate with you in terms of inheritance. We have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. While it is said today if you will hear his voice do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

For who having heard rebelled? Indeed was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Now with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of faithlessness. Therefore since a promise remains of entering his rest let us be afraid. Lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them but the word which they heard did not profit them not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed, we who have exercised faith do enter that rest as he has said. So I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest.

Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all his works and again in this place they shall not enter my rest.

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience. Again he designates a certain day saying in David today after such a long time as it has been said today if you will hear his voice to not harden your hearts for if Joshua had given them rest then he would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased from his own works just as God did from his. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest. Lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account. Seeing then that we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens Jesus the Son of God let us hold fast our confession our homo logeo if you will or homo logean.

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. This is a terrific passage for the illustrating the principle that we find in the Bible that we look back even as we look forward.

God's Word always resonates from the past through the present and into the future. And as we look back at national Israel and see the example that is given by God for believers and the walk of faith, the walk of dependence upon God, the walk that honors God, that puts God first, the walk through life that has no other God ahead of Him. We are encouraged from Genesis to Revelation to be diligent, to be dedicated, to be zealous if you will.

The word in verse 12 actually verse 11 is spudadzo. Spudadzo is a word that means to strive, to put effort into, to prioritize something. It is not casual.

It's not once in a while. It is a word that means because you prioritize something you become an expert in it. You treat something seriously or respectfully.

You assign it a high priority. When you look in the theological dictionary of the New Testament under the word group for spudadzo, spudaios, to be speedy, to be diligent, to be proficient, to be alert in a moral sense, noble, worthy, good, and upright. It also has, it began, spudai, originally meant to hasten, to be quick, to waste no time.

Things that we count as important we don't put off. We don't take the siesta, manana approach to things that we really consider important. There are people who will organize their day around their favorite television show or shows and make sure that if they've gone out shopping or they have other obligations they get them finished by seven o'clock or by nine o'clock or whenever it is their show comes on.

And you can see that while they're not necessarily thinking about their favorite TV show from dawn to dusk, when it's time for that TV show they move other things around to accommodate it. When we have an appointment, a medical appointment, dental appointment, an appointment that has to do with our financial or legal affairs, we prioritize that. We make sure we get there because if we don't get there on time we could lose the opportunity to gain whatever benefit is supposed to come from that appointment.

And so we organize other things around that. How seriously do we treat our appointments with God? Do we make sure if we set sometimes, and I'm not saying one is any better than another, different ones of us have different lifestyles, different schedules, different circumstances. But if you decide, I believe I will get up in the morning and spend time in meditation and prayer and concentrating on the things of God to start my day, with what sort of spudaios, with what sort of spuday do we treat that appointment with God? Does it slip away? Does it get shoved aside? Time for Bible study, time for consideration of what God would consider best, what God would be pleased with.

It's one thing, and we traditionally talk about our prayer time, our church attendance, our the overt functions of our spiritual life. But think about this, in the middle of the day when challenges come up, when a decision point is reached, when priorities have to be sorted out, are we spuday? Are we diligent? Do we treat our responsibility before God seriously? Do we stop and say, well, my gut reaction to this conversation, or my gut reaction to this happenstance, my first instinct at this decision point is option A. Do we stop? Is it important to us? We lose the battle, we fall short and drop in the wilderness before we get to the Jordan and before we cross into Canaan land, not by one great act of rebellion, usually. You have your Korahs and your Dathan's and your Abiram's, you have your sons of Aaron who bring strange fire, and you can have some great departure, but we tend to lose in little steps, little decisions, little losses of priority, where it's sort of the reverse of the frog in the ever-heating frying pan, where our ardor and our concentration cools in many small decisions.

The children of Israel who failed to get into the land didn't all drop at one great cataclysm, they didn't all die from the serpent's bite, they didn't all die with the flesh of the quail between their teeth, they didn't all die in battle, they didn't all die in any one cataclysm, it was a series of small decisions, here and there, here and there, and that pattern is what did them in. That's what the author of Hebrews is talking about in chapter 3 and chapter 4. All these things were written for our instruction, upon whom the culmination, the end of the ages has come, and they did not enter

into that rest because of faithlessness. We understand what being faithful is, it's not just one, when you talk about faithfulness in marriage, it's not resisting one opportunity to be faithless or to be unfaithful.

To be faithful to your spouse in marriage means faithfulness all the time. Faithfulness not just when there's an opportunity to stray in some sort of wayward physical relationship, but to be faithful in loyalty, to be faithful in love, to be faithful in compassion, to be faithful day by day by day in love, and in care, and in respect, and in nurturing and enhancing that relationship. And the same is true in the spiritual realm.

Let us therefore spudazomen, let us be spudazo, let us be diligent, proficient, alert, noble, prioritize it, meaning we do it right away. It's not so much hastiness, you know, haste makes waste, this is haste in the sense of the old hymn, I will hasten to him, hasten so glad and free, Jesus, greatest, highest, I will come to thee. I will make short work of getting to the place I need to be.

Josephus uses spudazo in the sense of assiduous interest or engagement, means to be zealous or conscientious, to be attentive, zealous, involved, dedicated. Otherwise, in verse 11 of Hebrews 4, anyone can fall according to that same example of disobedience. You'll notice that faithlessness and disobedience are two sides of the same coin.

When we are faithful, we have the strength to be obedient. When we are faithless, we are disobedient. They are unholy companions.

And then we have that very well-known verse in verse 12, because the Word of God is living and powerful, because it gives us discernment, because it gives us insight, we can have the same understanding of ourselves that God has. There is no creature that is hidden from his sight. All things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

And his insight can be our insight. We have been reminded recently of the need to judge ourselves so that we would not be judged. How do we gain the clear objective ability to evaluate where we stand? Well, we don't get it by our intelligence or our intense concentration.

It comes from the standards, the promises and principles and doctrines of the Word of God that tell us where God's priorities lie, what God is looking for, what God is pleased with. And of course, Hebrews 4 goes on and the rest of the book indeed goes on all the way through chapter 10 to talk about the Lord Jesus Christ and his great high priesthood and how he has made a way for us experientially as well as positionally through the veil to be connected to God, to have his power flowing through us. And it is one thing to read it on paper and it is another thing to remember and engage in the process of discovery and possession of that power.

That is why we are constantly trying to understand more of God's Word and that's why we find ourselves in Revelation chapter 3 beginning at verse 14 to look at the letter to the church at

Laodicea. To the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, these things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know your works and then at the place in every other letter where there is at least some word of commendation we find none.

There is not a single redeeming quality if you will in the Laodicean church. You are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot. How many times is that condition emphasized here? Thrice. When you think of failure and you think of the number three what do you think of? I tell you this night before the cock crows thrice.

Before the cock crows you will deny me thrice. Was Peter an unbeliever or a believer? He was very much a believer. He was with James and John with Jesus in the upper room and on the Mount of Transfiguration.

He walked on the water. He exercised the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church and yet when the chips were down there was a threefold denial of relationship.

Denial of connection. You are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or hot but because you are not cold or hot I will spew you.

I will vomit you out of my mouth. What is the nature of that lukewarm condition? We're going to examine that a little further this morning. But as we have noted in the other letters there is a background, a local background that is quite helpful to understand as we view what Jesus says specifically to the believers in Laodicea.

As I mentioned Friday night Laodicea was located in the Lycus Valley. It's in the southwestern portion of the province of Phrygia. P-H-R-Y-G-I-A This is where the Lycus River hits the Meander River.

The Meander River goes on down through Ephesus. There were also three great trade routes that formed a junction here. The first road went east from Ephesus and the Aegean coast and it kind of followed the Meander and the Lycus Rivers all the way to Anatolia.

The second road led south from Pergamum to the Mediterranean Sea at a city called Atalaia. This road that goes south from Pergamum is the road that goes by five of the seven churches that are addressed in these chapters. The third road went southwest from northern Phrygia.

These three roads were the main arteries for the entire region and the junction is right here at Laodicea. It's at the junction of two rivers it is at the junction of these three important trade routes. It is at this strategic entrance to the Lycus Valley so it has a great deal of importance.

This is why Antiochus II founded the city and it was a fairly recently founded city compared to some of the others that had been there for close to a thousand years. This city was founded in

about 250 BC by Antiochus II and it was for strategic reasons that he put it there. He named it after his wife Laodicea and he divorced her in 240 BC so we know that he had to have founded and named this city before then.

But the city itself occupies a square plateau that is elevated from the surrounding valley and it was sort of naturally fortified by the hills and so on and it was built up with walls and fortifications because it was a strategic location. It was a place where they could station garrisons and control arteries of trade and commerce as well as means of egress and ingress through the valley. The problem here is there was no good source of water in Laodicea or near Laodicea.

You would think well now wait a minute it's at the junction of two rivers but the Lycus River and the Meander River at this point are both very polluted. It's very impure, dirty water. If you've ever seen the muddy Mississippi in certain places you look over the bridge when you drive over and it's just brown.

That's the way the water is at this junction. It's not really usable water for drinking, what we call potable water. So that's no help.

The mineral springs that surround it have water but it's mineralized. I don't know if you've ever been in a place that has not too good water but different locations in the country this is why they invented water softeners because if you have hard water if you live in a place like this or you visited a place you go in and you try to take a shower and you get the soap and you start trying to soap up and you can't get any suds. You put shampoo in your hair and you can't get any lather.

The water just doesn't, it's so full of minerals that it's almost unusable and you get a drink of it out of the tap and people say oh no I've got this water cooler over here, use this or get the water out of my Brita filter or something because the water that comes out of the tap has got a kind of a tang to it. Well the water in Laodicea was worse, it was just not fit to drink. So when they founded the city they said well we've got this great location, it's strategically important but we've got no good water what do we do? Well they looked around and said where is the nearest source of drinkable water? And they looked about five miles to the south and they found a city that had some springs of reasonably drinkable water.

It was still laden with minerals but not near to the extent that the other water was. So they had to get past the local area where the springs were full of gases and chemicals and so they went five miles to the south and they found a place where there was a spring and so they piped water in. They made a pipeline out of stone.

They didn't have PVC. So they took blocks of stone that were about three feet across and they hollowed them out in the middle and then they stuck them together and they, three feet chunked by a yard at a time, they built this five-mile long pipeline. The water carried by those pipes was still full of impurities but it was the best that was practical to get.

But there were so many impurities in it that gradually these impurities settled out as they are prone to do and the calcium carbonate and the rest of it would clog these pipes. But the water that was piped from five miles distant was collected in a central water tower and then they had pipes that distributed through. You know the Romans were famous for their ability to plumb and we've still got aqueducts and sections of aqueducts standing today that the Romans put in.

Well that's what they did here in Laodicea. And there are sections of this water tower and some of the terracotta piping that they did within the city that are if you go to the archaeological sites in that region today you can see the remnants of this water system that was put in. And you can also see these thick calcium deposits in what remains.

In fact that's one of the reasons some of it's preserved is it was sort of fossilized by these impurity deposits that almost choked the surviving sections of pipe. So, water was an issue in Laodicea and unlike Colossae that had great springs of cold water available, Colossae was notable for their that you're really fortunate there are springs up near where I grew up in Oklahoma that come, I don't know if they are springs or if they're actually sort of jumbles in the water table, but there are places where water comes out of the ground and it looks like a spring to me. And the water is just icy cold even in summertime.

There's one up the hill at my folks place. Everybody here has been up to my folks. If you go up behind the house and behind the barn up there toward where my grandmother's mobile home used to sit there's a spring up there and the water that comes out from under the hill there is always really cold and it's refreshing.

You get cold spring water that's very enjoyable. If you go a few miles away to Hierapolis on the other side of the Lycus Valley, remember we talked about how Laodicea Hierapolis across the valley has the hot springs that are good for medicine and for soaking. If you go into Claremore, again near where my folks live, they used to be famous for their mineral baths and they had this mineral water that you would soak in and bathe in.

It's supposed to be good for arthritis and so on. It stunk to high heaven but it was supposed to have these medicinal properties. It was a big fad back in the first half of the 20th century to find mineral springs.

So you had hot water nearby, you had cold water, Colossae famous for its cold springs, nearby, but in Laodicea what kind of water do you think you got when you piped mineral laden water from five miles away through these rocks and it came out and sat in the water tower and then came out from there. What do you think the temperature and quality of that water was? It was lukewarm. It was just barely usable and people could enjoy a lot of things, could have a lot of riches, a lot of commerce and a lot of trade, but if you got to boil your water and throw your kettles away every other month because they calcify in order to get something that's drinkable and when you as it were turn the tap, one of your fundamental basic needs of life is not what it

should be.

You have lukewarm water. So this is one of the prevailing conditions, one of the notable features of life in Laodicea. And again, just to review a little bit of what I mentioned on Friday night, Laodicea was a great commercial center.

You can imagine that they're right at the juncture of these trade routes. It's like Chicago in the center of a big rail head and many other towns that you could note in that same situation. But they were so prosperous that when there was a huge earthquake in about 60 AD that leveled much of the region.

We spoke about it in looking at some of the other cities. Rome sent aid, just like being declared a disaster area by the president and they send federal money to get fixed up. Well, this entire region was greatly destroyed by an earthquake in about 60 AD and Rome sent money to rebuild.

And Laodicea said, don't send us any money, we'll do it ourselves. And they refused governmental help. They refused federal funding.

They said, we'll do it ourselves. And they rebuilt their city from the ground up, out of their own pockets. And they sort of prided themselves on the fact that they were so prosperous and so self-sufficient that they didn't need any help from Rome.

We have what we need to take care of ourselves here. And this was, within recent memory, this was what, 30 years roughly before the time of the writing of this letter. They also thrived agriculturally and became famous for this black wool textile industry.

They had cross-bred and carefully bred down through the generations these sheep that had this glossy black wool that was a very fine quality. And they wove it into clothing and carpets. And so they had inner garments and outer garments.

They made this outer garment called the trimatera that I mentioned on Friday. They also had inner garments of two different kinds called hematia and birros, B-I-R-R-O-S. And were famous throughout the region for this textile, this ability to create clothing out of this glossy black wool.

Black has become a popular color amongst Generation Z or whatever they are now that tattoo themselves and pierce themselves a lot and wear all black. Johnny Cash liked black a lot. The Puritans and the Catholic Church, lots of people really go for black cloth.

And there's something to be said for basic black. When you want to dress up and go out on an elegant evening, a lady that wears black and pearls and that looks good. Everybody here this morning, all the ladies have something black on.

It is a desirable if you're not going to wear white, or you can wear a combination of white and black, it makes a very great combination. Men in business suits, white shirt, black coat, that's one

of the standard ways to look impressive. Well, they were one of the great centers in the region for black cloth of all different weights, all different styles, and for the clothing that was made from it.

And then they could export that up and down all of these trade routes and put it on barges and send it down the river to the Mediterranean and so forth. So they were famous as a banking center. They were famous as a mercantile and textile center.

They were famous for medicine. They had a medical school in Laodicea. And this school was the ones that developed that tablet I spoke of on Friday night that was crushed into powder and made into eye salve that was supposed to alleviate various eye ailments.

This medical school had originally been founded in connection with a temple Menkaru, M-E-N space C-A-R-O-U. Menkaru was the temple and they had the medical school which was actually 13 miles to the northwest and so this was like an extension center of the temple that was 13 miles away. Men was M-E-N was an ancient Carian god of healing and he later kind of got mixed in with Asclepius.

We talked about Asclepius earlier. This famous Phrygian powder was even mentioned by Aristotle as a great medicine for weak eyes and it was manufactured there in Laodicea. So because Laodicea was a wealthy and successful city, famous for its industries, people were well off, they didn't have any need, they were exporters, they were not importers.

Their one weakness was in this water supply. They had the fortification, they were raised up on this plateau, they had man-made fortifications, they had a nice city wall system, had a garrison station there, but they had an Achilles heel. What do you think it was? If you were a general and had to attack Laodicea, how do you think you could best bring them to their knees? Well in any system of warfare you look at lines of supply.

If you can't beat somebody with a frontal assault, cut off their supplies. This is the principle of siege of a city. This is the principle of trying to interdict if someone has made a great advance into your town, you see if you can get behind them and cut off their lines of supply.

Well what is the fundamental line of supply for Laodicea? It's that pipeline, it's that water pipe, and that was their great Achilles heel. There's a man named Blake Locke who wrote an article on this and he says, such vulnerable communities must learn the art of appeasement and conciliation. Laodicea must have learned such arts and this is evident from the negative role that she played in history.

A society which lives in constant knowledge of its military helplessness develops characteristics of pliability and irresolution. In other words, if you can't hold out against attack, you've got to find a way to conciliate, compromise, and make peace. Such character can produce the kindlier virtues of tolerance and broad-mindedness, but in the face of evil, it is also likely to engender weakness and a reprehensible spirit of compromise.

Such, for good or ill, was the character Laodicea produced. There was no challenge in Laodicea from Jew or pagan, or if the challenge was there, the church did not accept it. The character of the town marked the church, hence the stern and vigorous condemnation in the letter which follows.

I think that's a very succinct way of saying it. We don't find the synagogue of Satan. We don't find any sense of conflict or holding out under persecution in Laodicea.

Why? We'll buy our way out. We'll trade our way out. We'll negotiate our way out.

We'll compromise and maneuver our way out of a conflict because we just don't want to lose. Well, that's the background of this letter, and I think you can see the way the conditions there illuminate what Jesus says. He comes and says, I know your works that you are neither cold nor hot.

You do not have the refreshing quality of the cold. You do not have the boiling ferventness of heat. Fervent is the translation of the Latin word that is used to translate the Greek word here about *zestos*.

Zestos is the Greek, and you get into F-E-R-V and its word associations in Latin, and that comes down into English as fervent. It literally means to boil or bubble under the influence of heat. So, you are neither cold nor hot.

You won't stand up for anything. You won't maintain a position that is in the extreme. You temporize.

You equivocate. You sit the fence. Why? Well, why should I stand up? Why should I hold the fort? Why should I maintain a position that is at the edge, that is in the forefront, that represents an extreme in one direction or the other? Why not? I have everything I need.

Why should I make waves? Why should I rock the boat? Why should I stay in conflict with anyone when I've got everything I need? There's no reason to stand up, to stand out, to stand forth in either direction, cold or hot, because I don't... What's the need? What's the point? Why bother? I've got what I need. I am rich. I have become wealthy.

I have need of nothing. Let me give you a final word or two on this hot, cold, and lukewarm. These words are only found in this combination here in Revelation.

We find the word *sucose*, P-S-U-C-H-R-O-S, talking about cold in connection with water only one other place in the New Testament. In fact, it's Matthew 10, 42. Remember when Jesus said, if you give a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in my name? In the Matthew account, this adjective is added to the water.

You give them a cup of cold water in my name. *Zeo* or *zestos*, that's used for hot here, this

particular form is only found here, but a related form is found over in Acts chapter 18 and verse 25, and it's talking about Barnabas and about his zeal in communicating the Word of God. Acts 18, 25, it talks about Apollos, I think I said Barnabas, I meant Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures.

He came to Ephesus, not too far from Laodicea. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, even though he knew only the baptism of John. He staked out a position, he stated what Scripture taught unequivocally, swimming against the tide of other Jews.

He planted himself in the forefront and stuck there. He was fervent in spirit, and it's the same word from zestos, from zeo, Z-E-O, which you hear a relationship to zao, which means to be alive, but zeo means to be hot, to be boiling, to be fervent. The other place it's used is Romans chapter 12 and verse 11.

Remember Paul starts that chapter talking about making your body a living sacrifice, to not be conformed to the world, be transformed. If you are transformed, you're going to be cold, or you're going to be hot, you're not going to be lukewarm. He says, let your love be without hypocrisy, have horror what is evil, cling to what is good, be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another, not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit serving the Lord.

Romans 12 11, fervent, have some fervency, have some dedication, have some chutzpah, have some fire in the boiler. There's nothing sadder. When we went down to the Galveston area, and they've got this Navy ship, and you go different places and they'll have these World War II or Korea era ships that are brought up, and they've made them into a museum, and you can go out and go up the gangway there, and go in and look around the ship.

It depressed me to no end. We went in and saw a submarine, and a little destroyer side-by-side, and I came away from that just depressed. It is a rusting has-been.

The life is gone. There are no sailors there. The decks are not being scrubbed.

The brass is not being polished. They come and do it every so often, but when you look at it, it's a lifeless hulk. If you've been on a real Navy ship, the thing is a living organism.

There are hatches opening and closing. There are individuals running to and fro, carrying out their duties. There are people railing and getting after their people.

This is not good enough. This is not painted enough. It's not polished enough.

You didn't salute it enough. Whatever it is, everything in the Navy, if it moves, you salute it. If it doesn't move, you paint it.

If you can't get the paint to stick, then polish it. But you're always doing something. It has a mission.

It has a purpose. It's going somewhere. It's under orders.

There are people who know their job and know their place, and it's a beehive of activity. It is so depressing to go to one of these. I think they ought to tow them out to sea and use them for target practice and get rid of them.

I think the idea of a ship docked in concrete for people to go in and look at what it used to be is just awful. It's metal ships. Now a wooden ship, if you want to go look at the Constitution or the Charles W. Morgan or something, that's so far gone in history, but if you want to see a Navy ship, go to one that's pulled up and is having tours where it's a living ship, where they can show you life.

Zestos, Zeo, fervency, purpose, fire in the boilers. You can fire up the engines and turn the screws and that thing can take off and go somewhere. They can still sail the USS Constitution.

Old Ironsides has sailed in the not-too-distant past. It's afloat. It will go.

You can hoist some sails and it will be a ship. These other things, it's just pathetic. Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.

How many different places do we have to look at steadfastness based on hope, diligence unto the end, those who by faith and patience inherit the promises. Well, the faith and patience is not waiting for some great persecution. It's not looking at the Inquisition or the Circus Maximus in Rome or something.

It is daily love that is not hypocritical. It is daily abhorrence of what is evil. It is daily clinging to what is good in the small normalcy of our existence.

God did not call us