


Glorious Gospel



**As many as received Jesus,
to them gave he power
to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe
on his name:
John 1:12**



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FULLNESS

Gordon Crook, Pastor
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“And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Ephesians 3:19

I have meditated much on this phrase, **‘being filled with all the fulness of God.’** It is what Paul prays for believers. It is entirely overwhelming to me. When one considers the idea that God’s fulness can fill us, we must first consider what God’s fulness entails.

Consider what God says about Himself in the Old Testament. **“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.” Jeremiah 23:24.** While this certainly refers to God’s presence being everywhere, it reminds us of the greatness of God in being able to fill everything, heaven and earth.

Paul tells us something about Jesus in **Colossians 2:9**, **“For in him (Jesus) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”** God has always intended that everything be brought together in Jesus, and Paul reminds us that it includes the fullness of the Godhead, that is the entire essence of the Godhead.

Jesus made it possible for us, who had fallen short of the glory of God, to be partakers of that divine life. **“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:3-4**

So we find that we who have trusted in Jesus have the Life of Jesus in us, **Colossians 1:27**. Now, consider that God places in us the Life of Christ who is the fullness of the Godhead, and we are just moving through life like we don't know if we can be what God wants us to be. It has never been about our ability. It has always been about the Life of Christ, and what He will do in us.

Too many of God's children are trying to get the **performance** right, and trying to make themselves presentable to God, when He has already made us presentable (**Ephesians 1:6**) and wants to fill us with Himself. Paul is praying for the saints (and that includes us) that we would be filled with the fullness of God. Not just a little bit, but all the fullness of God.

Let's consider the relationship between Jesus and His church. Paul uses the concept of a body to express the

relationship. **“Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” Ephesians 1:23.** The church (all believers) make up the body (the fulness) of Christ who fills everything. This is hard to understand with our little minds, but it is a spiritual work that God has accomplished; that God could use us to become the fullness of the One that fills all. Boggles the mind.

I am reminded of a fruit tree. It can only put forth fruit when there is sap flowing up the tree. The tree must be “full” so that it can produce the fruit. In **John 15**, Jesus reminds us that we must abide in Him, and He abides in us, and that is the only way we are able to bear fruit. The question might then be; how do we abide in Jesus?

Abiding in Jesus is having constant communion with Him. Constantly communicating with Him. We do this through prayer and study of the Scripture. Do you know what Jesus said? You should, because it is written for us in the gospels. Read, study, meditate. Be careful about getting your understanding of Jesus and His words from people on the internet. We can certainly hear what others have to say, but we must also read to see if those line up correctly with what Scripture says.

We need to have a true desire to be filled with the fullness of God. **“For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with**

goodness.” Psalm 107:9. The Psalmist understood that God is desiring to fill those that want Him. Our nature is to be filled with ourselves. Just let me be what I want to be, and do what I want to do. But God has something far better for those that desire. **“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6.**

Being filled with God means that every aspect of our lives is under His control. We are certainly willing to give God control of certain parts of our lives, but often want to keep control over others. We are convinced that we know how to fix ourselves to be what God wants us to be. However, this will always lead to failure.

Why are we so intent on keeping God from doing something in our lives that will be glorious for eternity, and bring glory to Him for eternity? It is because we have an enemy that is intent on keeping us from God’s best. Satan does not want you to be filled with the fullness of God.

In Scripture, we are encouraged to be content with such as we have. However, I don’t want us to confuse contentment with complacency. They are not the same. Complacency is what keeps us from desiring more of God. I don’t care how far you have come with the Lord, there is still more. He always has more for us. All He needs from us is a willing vessel. He will fill us to overflowing.

Think on These Things-Part 1

(Phil. 4:8)

by
Pastor Vicky Moots
Kingman, Kansas

Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

In this verse, Paul lists eight things which believers are to think upon. Eight is the number of the new creation. Jesus was raised on the eighth day. These things are all attributes of Christ and the new creation life of Christ in us. They are all also characteristic of the Word of God.

Too often we set our minds upon the things of the world which we see and hear in the news, things that tend to bring fear and anxiety and cause us to fret and worry. Paul is hereby admonishing us to shun those things and to refuse to allow them to overwhelm us. Instead, we are to meditate upon Christ and the written Word.

The first thing which he lists is "whatsoever things are true." The Greek word for "true" is "alethes," meaning "a true one who cannot lie" or "a true thing that is not a lie." This of course speaks of Jesus, who proclaimed in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life..." We also read regarding Jesus, in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld

his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

And in v. 17 John states, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Then Jesus declares Himself to be the “true bread from heaven” in John 6:32 and the “true vine” in John 15:1. Not only is Jesus Himself true, but so is the Word of God, as David proclaims in Ps. 119:160: “Thy word is true from the beginning...”

In John 18:38, when Jesus was brought before Pilate to be judged, Pilate asked Him, “What is truth”? Many people today are still pondering the same question. So how can we really know what is true and what is not? Jesus answered the question for us in John 16:13 when He told His disciples, “Howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth...”

The Spirit of Truth is the Holy Spirit who was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, and He is available to all who will receive Him. Today we live in a world that is filled with the lies of Satan. These lies are emanating from our newscasts, social media, political leaders, and, sadly, even being preached from some pulpits by false teachers. We need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives to guide us and to give us discernment regarding what is truth so that we will not be led astray. We must also study the Word of God. If something is contrary to God’s Word, then it is not the truth. Therefore, let us follow the instruction of the apostle Paul and fix our minds upon the truth of the Word and upon Christ Himself.



SHARING TESTIMONIES

I Am Privileged

Gordon Crook

I have been thinking about my life and how I got where I am, and it occurs to me that I should acknowledge all of the privilege I have enjoyed. I know a lot of people think we “**earn**” what we have. However, when I consider the truth of how I got here, I can only conclude that I was truly privileged.

First privilege. I was privileged to be born into a Christian family that considered it important to ensure I learned about Jesus. I don't want to make it seem like being born into a non-believing family is terrible or will keep a person from knowing Jesus, but being taught as a child about Jesus is a privilege.

Second privilege. Living for ten years in Paraguay as a son of missionaries. Seeing people in deep poverty that loved the Lord and people who were extremely hospitable. A real lesson in understanding contentment, gratitude and trusting God for His provision.

Third privilege. Going to college. God allowed me to get a college education in engineering. It is certainly possible to do well without a college education, but for me, it was critical to where God would take me later.

Fourth privilege. God provided a great job in Wichita, Kansas which allowed me to sit under the ministry of Jack and Earlene Davis. Throughout 37 years at this job, God kept me from several layoffs. I was moved to different projects seemingly just in time to be protected from a layoff that should have left me jobless. I was never responsible for choosing those movements in my career. I consider that a great privilege that God would see fit to allow me to stay in that job for that long.

Fifth privilege. As mentioned above, I was privileged to sit under the ministry of Jack and Earlene Davis for all of these years. That was preparation for what God would call me to do now; pastor the church in Wichita.

Sixth privilege. A wonderful and beautiful wife. I was pretty well resigned to probably being single for the rest of my life after college. Without getting into all the details, God brought me a wonderful woman to be my wife. We met at a fellowship meeting in Kansas City, and it quickly became clear to me that Cathy was exactly what I needed.

All of these are the result of God's grace in my life. I can think of quite a few others, but I want to just list the most important privilege that everyone can enjoy if they simply put their trust in Jesus Christ.

This is the greatest privilege. **"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it**

doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1John 3:1-2. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” Hebrews 10:19-22.



God's Protection and Healing

Mattea Crook

The morning of October 15th, I woke up with a headache. It was no different than any other headache. It was however, making me feel very nauseous. I asked Dad (Gordon Crook), to come watch Evie while I tried to nap to get rid of the headache. Before I laid down, I popped my neck. It didn't feel any different from any other time I had done it. I laid down and went to sleep. An hour later, something woke me up, telling me to turn. My left arm wouldn't move. I thought it was asleep. When I didn't feel the tingling, I knew something was wrong. I went to tell Dad and as I explained what I was feeling, I could feel my face start to droop. This was a

stroke. I knew immediately. It was as if The Lord had put the feeling in my gut that I needed to go to the emergency room. After being seen, the doctors told me I had torn my carotid artery which caused a blood clot on the right side of my brain. Thankfully they were able to get the medication in me to break up the clot. I was able to regain feeling and movement in my face and my leg. My arm however, wasn't so fortunate. They put me in rehab to help regain movement.

I was at Wesley rehab center for exactly 2 weeks. There were times I was so discouraged, but even through the hard moments, I felt the Lord there. By the Grace of God, I was able to walk out of there almost completely back to normal. They wanted me to do continuing care, but I knew that God had me, and I had full movement about a week later! I left that recovery center with a new outlook on life and how precious it is and with more new friends than I can count. I still go back to visit the occupational therapists and physical therapists that helped me. One even wrote a school paper about me! I've also felt called to go back to visit other patients there to encourage and pray for them. I try to visit at least once or twice a month. Please keep those that are there in your prayers.

In the December 2025 Glorious Gospel is a testimony from Gordon Crook with his view of this incident.



A LEPER

Mark 1:40-41

A leper came unto the Lord -
his need for all to see.
His body wracked with pain,
longing to be free.

A leper came unto the Lord -
crying out with grief.
Begging for deliverance,
and longing for relief.

A leper came unto the Lord -
and fell upon his face.
His heart with faith believing,
in God's abundant grace.

A leper came unto the Lord -
and worshiped at His feet.
His heart cried out for mercy,
his attitude ... so sweet.

Jesus saw the leper's need -
felt his pain and grief.
His heart moved with compassion,
to give him sweet relief.

Jesus saw the leper's need -
and spoke the Word to heal.
His Hand reached out and touched,
to prove that it was real.

A sinner came unto the Lord -
a leper in God's eyes.
And like that leper long ago,
his heart for mercy cries.

A sinner came unto the Lord -
and knelt before God's Son.
Seeing only his great need,
and all that Christ had done.

A sinner came unto the Lord -
and fell upon his face.
His heart with faith believing,
in God's abundant grace.

Jesus saw the sinner's need -
heard his cry of grief.
Lifted off that heavy load,
and gave him sweet relief.

Jesus touched that sinner's life -
for all the world to see.
For once he came to Him,
forever he was free.

Debbie Isenbletter
Springfield, Missouri

Ephesians

Pastor Gordon Crook
Part 5

Chapter 2

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” Ephesians 2:1-4

“Quickened” – **“make alive.”** Notice again, that this is God’s work. He is the one that has made us spiritually alive in Christ Jesus. Also notice that we were dead. We had no power to make ourselves alive. Remember God’s power from chapter 1. He brought Jesus from the dead so that we could be made spiritually alive.

It seems to me that many today do not understand just how terrible sin is. We often gage people by how **“good”** we think they are, and human philosophy suggests that there is **“good”** in every person. Scripture has a different view. We were **“dead”** in sin and trespasses. Not physically dead, but spiritually dead. And only He can change that to life because of Jesus and His resurrection.

Paul instructs us as to the fact that we were (outside of Christ) yielding to spiritual powers that kept us in sins and trespasses. We were following the time frame of this world that is under the dominance of spiritual powers that are contrary to God. This is the period that we live in, and it will only end when Jesus returns to put down all opposition to Himself. **“Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing [that is] not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.” Hebrews 2:8.** Clearly not everything is currently in subjection to Jesus, but it will be at the end of this period (age).

He refers to us **“having”** (past tense) our **“conversation”** (way of living) according to this world. That past tense means that, as God’s redeemed children, we should no longer be yielding to those powers, but to the life of Christ that is now in us. God didn’t just make us **“good”** people, He made us **ALIVE** in Christ Jesus. We should be **living** in that power.

He refers to the “children of disobedience” which is all of those that have not put their trust in Jesus. As God’s precious children, we no longer fit that description. Are we sometimes disobedient? Certainly, but not **“children of disobedience,”** which refers to belonging to the prince of the power of the air, but rather **“children of God.”** **“Children of wrath”** refers to our condition outside of Jesus Christ. All of those who reject Him will be under His wrath. Again, this no longer applies to those who have put their trust in Jesus for redemption.

Notice that those that are rejecting Jesus and choosing to live their lives outside of Him, they live fulfilling the

desires of their flesh. It is clear that we are not to live this way. We have a new life; the life of Christ in us, to which we should be yielding. If we are indeed yielding to Him, then we will be fulfilling the desires of the Spirit. Remember that the fruit (visible output) of our life is the result of the Spirit. **Galatians 5:22-23**. The works of the flesh, **Galatians 5:19-21**, are the result of fulfilling the desires of our flesh.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" Ephesians 2:5-6

Thank God that He made us alive even while we were in this "dead" condition. He did not wait until we were able to do something to get out of that condition. He did not wait until we could show some change in behavior. We were "dead;" unable to do anything to make ourselves alive, but God showed mercy and love towards us. **Romans 5:6-8**. We must not ever reduce this to some simple concept that we just talk about lightly. This is more amazing than all of the knowledge we have about the entire universe.

What I really love about God is that He never does just the minimum. He always goes far beyond what would be considered sufficient. He did not just make us alive (that would be more than we could expect), He raised us up and sat us in heavenly places in Christ.

We might consider our situation today, looking around us, and think that we have missed out on that placement. This is exactly how the enemy will attack our minds. However, we must realize that when God says something is so, He sees the end from before He stated it. I recognize that there is still coming a day when we will literally be sitting with our Lord in the heavenlies, but even now, we are already provisionally there. Many of God's children fail to lay hold of this truth and miss out on the amazing power that is ours because of Jesus.

“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:7

And finally, we get to God's overall purpose. He is not making us “good” people, He is working something far greater that He will be able to show for all eternity. He will not be showing how great we were able to make ourselves, but how great His grace is. He will be showing the power of His grace to take a wretch like me and make something that is glorious. His work, not mine.

This is why it is important to quit trying to add our attempts to the finished work of Jesus. Paul refers to it as frustrating the grace of God. **Galatians 2:21**. There is so much push in Christendom today to bring people back under the law. You must keep the Torah, they say. Jesus has done all that is required and we are now God's work by grace.

Continued



Meditation on John 11:32

Pastor Debbie Isenbletter

Springfield, Missouri

"Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." John 11:32

Her DESTINATION: "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was," Mary came as she had been instructed. She came because Jesus had asked her to. She came in obedience in His word, without question, without hesitation. She came knowing where to come. She came publicly, though she had been told privately. She came with liberty. She came with boldness. She came with her sorrow. She came with her need. She came with her faith. Jesus waited for her to come. He did not go on until she has this personal time with Him. I believe He was watching and waiting until she came. Mary carried a burden of sorrow and was weighted down with the loss of her brother. She knew the relief she would find when she came to Jesus.

This is a wonderful picture of how we come to the Lord. We come because He has invited us to, because our hearts have heard His call. Because His love and compassion draws us. We come personally and privately but when we do, we do not care if others know about it. This is our privilege, and it is a precious one. We come to Him knowing where He is, He is not hard to find. We come knowing He is waiting for us. All we need do is lift up our hearts and eyes and come to Him by faith. We come to the throne of grace. We come to Him with all our needs, all our burdens, all our fears, all our sorrows. We come to Him and lay everything at His feet. Jesus is watching and waiting for us to come. The fact that we are willing to come is a testimony of faith.

Jesus issued this invitation to “come” to Him, and Mary heard it, accepted it, and fully embraced it. He still offers this invitation today. It has not changed because he has not changed. The offer is made to those who feel their need and see that only He can meet their need. Jesus is waiting for those to do as Mary, for those who hear Him and came to Him. It is seen in the invitation to discipleship: “come and follow me.” (Mat.19:21) It is an invitation to lay down our burdens and rest in Him: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mat.11:28). It waits upon the Lord’s leading and enabling. For Peter when seeing Jesus walking on the water, said: “Lord, if thou wilt, bid me to come unto thee.” (Mat.14:28). It is an invitation for the smallest, age does not matter: “Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me.” (Mat.19:24)

Her COMPREHENSION: “and saw him,” John says Mary “saw him.” The word “saw” means she “knew” Him, she recognized Him. This means that she “beheld” Him. I believe that means that Jesus filled her vision, she could see no one else. She saw Him with her eyes, but she also saw Him with her heart. She saw Him through the eyes of faith. She saw Him through her tears. Is this not wonderful! There is a progression in her journey from her house to His feet. First Mary came and then she saw. First, we must be willing to come, then we will truly see Him. We see Him in a greater way because we have come closer to Him. Mary, saw only Him. I do not think she saw the disciples or the people that followed her. Her eyes were fixed upon Him. “Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full, in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim. In the light of his glory and grace.” Mary was about to see His glory and His grace revealed! This is what we do by faith with our needs, our sorrows, our burdens. We come knowing He wants us to come and when we come by faith, we will see Him. He will fill our vision and I believe nothing else will matter but being in His Presence.

Her SUBMISSION: "she fell down at his feet." "fell down" means to "prostrate oneself" and is used of those "making supplication." It is also used to show "worship." Mary is not ashamed to do this. This is her default position, the one she has taken in her home as she sat at His feet as a disciple. Mary did this privately, now she will do this publicly. Mary is overcome and overwhelmed by both sorrow and joy. There is sorrow that her brother has died and joy that her Master has arrived. She fell at His feet physically, lay prostrate before Him and in so doing showed an absolute surrender of her will and an absolute acceptance to His will. This is the position of an overcomer, of one who not knowing why things happen, rather than rebel, come and not only kneel but fall on their faces before the Lord.

Jesus did this when prayed to His Father in the Garden. "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Mat.26:39). Jesus surrendered to the Will of God in order to fulfill the Word of God. Jesus gave us a visible example of self-surrender when He accepted that cup of suffering. He would drink every last drop because it was the Will of God. That surrender of His will is the foundation for His victory. He was not the Victim at the Cross; He was the Victor.

"At his feet" is the place and position that is seen in the testimony of overcomers. It is a place of submission, but it is also a place of victory. The 24 elders and 4 living ones, who had been standing around the throne, in a place of authority later "fall down before him that sat on the throne." (Rev.4:10) They have overcome, and they are overcome as they stand in His presence. They are overcome with joy. This is absolute adoration and absolute submission. They are in closer proximity to Jesus and have a deeper revelation of Him. The great multitude, who stand before the throne, give a testimony of faith, but I noticed their testimony is given

standing. There is a reaction from all who hear their testimony. When it is heard, those who are standing closer to the throne (the angels, the elders the living ones), all fall down before the throne on their faces and worship God. (Rev.7:9-12) Both these groups have a testimony of faith, but one does so standing, and the other does so kneeling.

What Mary does is a picture of those who have made it a habit and are comfortable at the feet of Jesus. Whose revelation of Jesus bring them in their need to a position of utter submission. And this submission is a place of victory and overcoming.

Her DECLARATION: "saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." The words of Mary sound the same as the words of Martha. But she says them from a place of submission. She is at the feet of Jesus, bowing down before Him, submitting to His Will. They are words that come from her deep sorrow but also from her deep faith. Martha had a measure of faith when she said these words, but it was not the same as Mary's.

What she says here is not an accusation, but a declaration and confession of faith. She knew if Jesus had come her brother would not have died, just as Martha did. She declared this. She calls Him, "Lord" just as Martha did but unlike Martha, she does not say anything more. Martha had told Jesus she knew He could "ask" or "beg" God, and God would hear Him. But Mary does not ask Him to ask God for anything. She sees His power and authority and simply submits to Him. She did not say, 'Why did you not come sooner? Why did you delay?' 'Why did my brother have to suffer and die?' She did not blame Jesus for not being there. Her words combined with her sorrow and her submission, will move Jesus in a way that Martha's words did not. Martha had a little faith, but Mary had greater faith. Each of us have different degrees of faith and we all grow in our faith"

BE STEADY

Jack Davis

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God...” Rev. 3:11-12a.

The Apostle Paul spoke in Philippians three, of winning Christ. Here we read of crown winners. Those that win Jesus Christ as their bridegroom will be crown winners. These are they who are overcoming here and now, and are thus being made pillars to stand and uphold. This is an important part of being ready for our Lord’s return. We overcome by holding to, and standing fast for that which we’ve been given. Thankful hearts appreciate that which has been committed to our trust.

A WINNING TRAIT

“But thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” I Cor. 15:57-58.

It is scripturally evident that “steadfastness” is one of the essential characteristics of an overcomer. If it is **required**, it will be **rewarded**. In thankfulness for the victory that God has given us through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are urged to “STEADFASTNESS.” In resurrection hope of Christ’s return we are given a sure and steadfast anchor for our souls Heb. 6:18-19, I am impressed how strongly Paul **encouraged** it, and was **encouraged** by the steadfastness of the brethren. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be

strong" I Cor. 16:13. "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render unto God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before God: I Thess. 3:7-9. "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" Col. 2:5. He was thus blessed by hearing of faithful soldiers who could keep rank.

I think brother Paul sounds somewhat disappointed and very lonely in II Tim. 4:10-16. He had seen some departures, some removed to other fields, responsibilities, others finish their course, and others like Demas depart for selfish reasons. I am glad to hear him sound a word of cheer in verses 17-18. I am reminded of Psalm 142:3-5, "When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living."

We understand that fuller partakership in Christ is to be realized in continued steadfast confidence— Heb. 3:14. Beloved the race is almost over. The battle is on, and steadfastness in the faith is a necessity. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" Phil. 1:27. Steadfast resistance of our adversary is done in the faith— I Pet. 5:9. It seems that most of God's people are painfully slow at learning where the

strength for stability is found. We are enabled to stand only as we are strong in the Lord and the power of His might. We stand as our loins are girted about with truth –Eph. 6:10,14.

STEADY HANDS

Moses, sent Joshua out to fight against Amalck. Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill overlooking the battleground. Moses took the rod of God in his hand and when he held it up Israel prevailed in battle, but when he let it down Amalek prevailed. So Aaron and Hur took a stone and put it under him, and stayed up Moses' hands on either side. Moses' hands were steady until the going down of the sun. Therefore Joshua defeated Amalek Ex. 17:9-13. They who stand for the whole counsel of God today also need their hands upheld. Let us encourage each other for victory.

STAND IN YOUR PLACE

Judges 6-8 as a form of correction the Midianites were allowed to prevail against Israel. Therefore the Israelites were hiding in dens, and caves, and strongholds. Their enemies destroyed their crops and left them no sustenance. Israel being so greatly impoverished cried unto the Lord. Then the Lord raised up Gideon, who was not a self confident or self sufficient man. We see God working in him to make him ready to stand. This unlikely man was divinely prepared to lead to glorious victory an unlikely band, with some very unorthodox implements of warfare in their hands. Gideon needed assurance for himself from the Lord, and he faced though opposition at home. But then a multitude of Midianites, and Amalekites and children of the east gathered to lay siege against them in the valley of Jezreel. When they did, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. He blew the trumpet and gathered a goodly army after him. This was an amazing feat in itself, yet

Gideon needed further confirmation. God so graciously gave it, with the fleece, and hearing of the dream and its interpretation in the Midian camp.

Before they went to war God twice greatly reduced Gideon's army. First God had Gideon send home all those that were "fearful and afraid." God was going to use those that would stand in the face of overwhelming odds. (Paul urged "stand fast in one spirit...in nothing terrified by your adversaries" Phil. 1:27). Gideon saw his army go from twenty two thousand to ten thousand men. God had the remaining men go down to the water to be proven yet further. We must remember that this was a most dangerous moment, there was a multitude ready to attack. Those men that gave themselves to satisfying their legitimate thirst and bowed themselves on their knees to drink, were sent home. Satisfying their desire seemed more important than the security of their people. Those that lifted the water to their mouth were the three hundred that remained. Those alert and erect would be more quickly ready for battle. God chose those that would stand. He used this test to close up the ranks. Now spiritually speaking we stand best on our knees. We do well to be alert to the times wherein we live.

Gideon and his men surrounded the camp of their enemy by night armed with trumpets, pitchers, lamps and faith in their God. "By faith they turned to fight the armies of aliens" (Heb. 11:34). They were part of those who through faith subdued kingdoms. When they blew the trumpets brake the pitchers, and held forth the lamps, and shouted the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. **"They stood every man in his place all the host ran and cried and fled. Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel."** Our Father records such victories to encourage us to spiritual stability. We each may be used to strengthen the other and will be

rewarded for standing in our God-given place. Ezekiel was called on to warn his people. "Ye have not gone up into the gaps neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord Eze. 13:5. "I sought for a man among them...but found none." Eze. 22:30.

WHO WILL STAND

There are those that make gaps, some are used to fill them, and others that stand in them. If all went off in different directions and left all responsibility behind who would stay by the stuff? Neglect is easy, we can make all kinds of excuses for being unfaithful, but our Lord wants to make us pillars that stand and support. When we are unfaithful, we make it more difficult for others to fill the gap, covering more territory and taking greater responsibility. This works good for those upon whom it falls, but is not so beneficial for the slackers. Thank God that in the times of falling away He widens His pillars and raises up new ones. There are times we feel weak, faint, unstable, anything but steadfast and unmoveable. In those times we are learning to lean hard upon Him who is our rock. He would be our stay, make us steady, enable us to stand Rom. 14:4. David's song of praise when the Lord delivered him (Psa. 18:17-19) "The Lord was my stay." God delights to make any who depend upon him, dependable. He is our firm support, our upholder.

The love of Solomon's life requested, "Stay me with flagons." In other words she expected him to invigorate and sustain her as he poured on his intoxicating love. That's how we feel as we lean on the bosom of our beloved. Apostle Paul said, "None of these things moved me neither counted I my life dear unto myself that I might finish my course with joy." **Soon we may join him. Glory to God, think of that.**

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