

A Powerful Witness

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[0 : 00] Colossians chapter 1. I think with that we need to get on into it here. Colossians chapter 1 starting with verse 9.

And I'm going to read through verse 11 this time. And verse 11 is where we're going to stop and spend our time together. And tonight. Again, in case you have missed the last two Sunday nights. This is a prayer. Not your everyday run of the mill prayer. This is serious prayer. Paul's prayer for the Colossian believers.

But a tremendous prayer for us to pray for one another. For this reason also. Verse 9. For this reason also since the day we heard of it.

We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask. That you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. To please him in all respects. Bearing fruit in every good work. And increasing in the knowledge of God. Strengthened with all power.

[1 : 30] According to his glorious might. For the attaining of all steadfastness and patience. Courage. Joyously. Joyously.

We'll end right there. Even though that's not the end of the sentence. And yet that's what we're going to look at tonight. Now just a quick word of review. Verse 9.

Of that text. Next. The focus is a practical wisdom. See we're working our way through this prayer. The prayer is very logical. Begins with wisdom.

And ends with worship. So we're moving from wisdom to worship. And the first emphases. Of the several emphases in the prayer.

Is a practical wisdom. Number 2. We looked at this last Sunday night. A pleasing walk. And it builds. Does not. The practical wisdom that we need.

[2 : 28] Is so that we. Will walk pleasingly. Have a pleasing walk. Verse 10. And now. As we look at the third element of Paul's prayer.

Let's see. A powerful witness. A powerful witness. When I want to name this. This third element of the prayer.

Share. You know there are several ways. To give a witness of your faith. You can do it one on one. And that. Certainly is the best way. We're just.

One on one. Face to face. You have the opportunity. To take God's word. Either memorized. Or right out of a Bible. As you read it. Or maybe even in a gospel track. And you just share.

With that one. Whom you believe. Is lost. Share the gospel. So one on one. Is a good way. To give a witness of your faith. You can do it.

[3 : 25] Also through. Some ministry. In the church. To involve yourself. In. In a ministry. Whether it's teaching. A Sunday school class. Or even working in a class.

Or being a part. Of vacation Bible school. Some of you. Going to be this next week. And. You can be involved in ministry. You can be a part of the choir. And give a witness.

Of the faith. You can do it that way. You can do it through. Supporting missionaries. And we do that as a church. Don't we? Support. Missionaries around the world.

And. At home. You can be a missionary. If you want to. Whether it's just temporary. Short term. Or long term. Vocationally. And. That's a good way. A great way. To give a witness.

Of our faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ. You can do it. Though it's not enough. You can do it. Through your lifestyle. And should. Do it through a lifestyle. Christian lifestyle.

[4 : 21] Loving people. As Christ loves people. Providing. For people's needs. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. You can do it through. Your own witness of your life.

The purity of your lifestyle. And so forth. And I can name some others. And I'll end with. One more. And it. Is the subject. Of verse 11. You can give a witness.

Of your faith. Through. A right. Response. To suffering. And personal persecution. Because somebody's watching.

You can give a witness. Of your faith. And how you react. To the bad stuff. That happens. In your life. That's the subject here. That's the focus. Or the objective.

Of this third element. Of Paul's prayer. That's why I've called this. A powerful witness. In what he describes here. What he is praying for here. And it begins. With power.

[5 : 25] And I want to call it. An obtainable power. This is what he's praying for. It's for power. But it's a power that you can have. It's an obtainable power. Look at verse 11.

Again. Again. He prays. Strengthened. With all. Power. According to his glorious might. That's the prayer.

It's an obtainable power. Now. You know. Full well. As believers. You can testify. To this reality. That in order to live the Christian life.

You need power. And it's a power you don't have in yourself. Now. You can try to do it in your own power. And most of us do. To some measure or another.

We all do. Try to do it in our own strength. Try to do it in our own power. Just kind of discipline. The Christian life. Into our life. And just.

[6 : 20] You know. Grunt. And work. And sweat. And toil. And try to live that Christian life. And you know. That it does not work.

Not only that. It's worse than that. It is an affront. To a holy God. Try to live the Christian life. In that way. You know. You need. The power. Of God. Resting and operating.

In your life. In order to live the Christian life. In a way that pleases him. And honors him. You know that. And. We need it. Don't we? Must have it.

Must have this power. And. Now. We do know. That we have spiritual life. Right. As Christians. We do have that right now. It's imparted to us.

By a sovereign God. According to his sovereign grace. The very moment we enter. Into a new birth relationship. With God through Christ. Jesus said.

[7 : 15] In John 6. 47. He that believes in me. Has everlasting life. So we have life. Now. That's good. That's great.

We also need power. The resurrection. By the way. Of Jesus Christ. Is also manifestation. Of the power of God. His glorious power. Romans 6.

4. Says. Therefore. We are buried with him. By. Baptism. Into death. That like as Christ. Was raised from the dead. By the glory of the father. For even so. We also should walk.

In newness of life. So the resurrection power. Is available. To us. The very same power. For the glory of God. That raised Jesus. From the dead.

So we need that power. In our lives. So when Paul refers to. This glorious might. There. The second time. He uses a word.

[8 : 10] That refers to power. Might. In some sense. He first says. All power. By his glorious might. So when Paul is referring. To the glorious might. He's referring. To the God's side.

Of power. That part. Of power. That is manifested. To man. Or toward man. Revealed to man. But now moving. To the man's side.

Of the spiritual power. Paul's prayer. Was that the Colossian believers. Would be strengthened. With all power. All power. According to his glorious might.

That is the power. That you need. And I need. As Christians. That we know we need. And we know we can't do without. That power we need. Is something we don't have.

In ourselves. It's not something we can. Go out. And obtain. By ourselves. We're not born into it. Or born with it.

[9 : 07] Not the first birth anyway. And we don't develop it. Though we do feed it. Through our spiritual disciplines.

We certainly feed it. But we don't develop this ourselves. We're not learning it. Into our lives. God imparts it. The power we need.

That's why. Again. I would remind you. That. This prayer. The apostle Paul. Serious prayer. Prayer. He's praying. For these Colossian believers.

Praying that they would have something. That can't get anywhere else. They can't even. Drum it up. In themselves. It's something that God must give them. They need. Power. It is his power. That's operating. In us. And enabling us. To live the Christian life. In a way that pleases God. And. And works.

[10:00] According to his purposes. It's God that worketh in you. Both the will. And to do. Of his good pleasure. According to scripture. Now Paul says. Strengthen with all power.

And I. Probably don't need to mention this. But you know he's not talking about. Absolute power. Right. Certainly not. Only God has absolute power. He is the only one who is.

Omnipotent. Rather. It means. Sufficient power. That is the power we need. That's what Paul is praying for. That you would have all the power you need.

God has all power. And God gives us. All the power we need. So that we can do all. He wants us to do. Just as simple as that.

Isn't it? Now. Some of you might be thinking. In this room. Preacher. Why don't I have that spiritual power?

[11:01] Can you tell me why it is. That I seem to be so weak spiritually? I could name a number. Of reasons. And all of them would lead to.

The same thing. Really. Much as we. Don't want to admit it. But there is only. One thing. That robs the Christian.

Of spiritual power. And the answer. Is. A three letter. Word. That starts with S. Ends with N. Know what it is?

Sin. You know Samson. In the Bible. One of those. Colorful heroes. In the. The Old Testament. I would say Samson.

You know. Is the greatest. The best illustration. Of this. I mean. Here's Samson. You know. Big he man. Strong guy. You know. I really have the idea. And I think. Some preachers I've heard.

[11:59] Who've explained this. I think they're right. When they say. That if you were to look upon Samson. He would not be some big. Hulk Hogan. Or. See. I'm trying to think of someone. More contemporary. Some big muscle man.

I mean. Because if he. Had bulging muscles. You just kind of say. Well. You know. There's the answer right there. That's why he's so strong. I mean. Just look at all those muscles. I don't think Samson. Looked all that much different. Than other men.

The difference was. God's power. Arrested upon his wife. Now Samson. Had taken. A Nazarite vow. And. So he had to abstain.

From. Alcoholic beverages. From drinking. Any of that. Any fermented. Beverages. Any. Could not cut his hair. Part of the vow.

And. Could not. Touch dead things. All right. You see. Some people say. Well. His great power. Came through his long hair. So when. Delilah.

[12:57] Cut the long hair off. Then he lost all his power. Now you're. You're missing it. That's part of the vow. He had taken. To. To God. And God's power.

Rested upon his life. As long as he. Was obedient to him. Well. Samson. Got off track. Didn't he. And. Not only was he messing around. With dead things. He was also.

Drinking. Getting drunk. So drunk. That he kept falling asleep. In Delilah's. Lap. Eventually. She cut all his hair off. Having an immoral.

Relationship. With several women. Actually. And. The power of God. Was just lifted. From his life. In fact. Samson. Was so deep into it. He didn't even know it. And when the Philistines.

Came to. To capture him. He said. Don't worry. I'll just go out. As before. And the Bible. Says. He did not. Even know. That God's power.

[13:54] Had left him. The perfect example. Say. It's always sin. In some form. Or another. Whether it's the. Sin of. Sin of omission. Or sin of commission.

And it's always a mixture. Of both. Sin. Is what. Keeps us. From. Spiritual power. There's only one thing.

That'll rob you of it quicker. And it's sin. Rob you of spiritual strength. Rob you of spiritual vision. Rob you of spiritual zeal. Rob you of. Of spiritual sensitivity. And discernment. Rob you of spiritual. Fervor. There isn't anything.

More than sin. That will rob you. Of that. All right. Now. Paul prays. For power. So number one. That power. For which Paul prays.

[14:50] Is an obtainable power. We get. All the power. We need. From the God. Who has all power. Who is all power. Now. The second thing.

This obtainable power. Is needed. To produce. To produce. Something. Very important. In the life of the believer. Father. And. That is. What I want to call.

An observable. Patience. Patience. In the midst. Of a life. That's. Just not easy. Life. That is hard. On nearly every front. An observable. Patience. You see. This. Again. Very logical. Paul. Says. I pray. That you might be. Strengthened.

With all power. That's what we need. According to his glorious. Might. That's where we get it. For. [15:43] The attaining. Do you see it there. Verse 11. For the attaining. Of all steadfastness. And. Patience. And that's. Why. We need it. It's very.

Very logical. Now. Steadfastness. And patience. Paul. Uses. Two words. There. That on the surface. Really. Basically. Mean the same thing.

Or at least. They appear to mean. The same thing. Now. They're two. Different words. In the Greek language. And yet. In the English. We have a hard time. You know. Nailing it down.

Pinning it down. Just what does it mean. In fact. In the New American Standard. You might notice. That it says. Steadfastness. And patience. In the King James. It's patience.

And long suffering. So. You know. They invert. Patience is over here. On the one hand. And patience over here. On the other hand. And so. Just what is it. So it's difficult. For us to maybe. Put a. Put our thumb on.

[16:36] Exactly. What the two. Words mean. Now they. Do mean. Basically the same thing. And yet. They are different. In one very important way. The word.

Steadfastness. Steadfastness. I'm reading out of the New American Standard. That's the first word. He says. Steadfastness. And patience. The word. Steadfastness. Refers to.

How. The Christian. Responds. Under the power of God. To bad things. In life. Things. Bad things. That happen. I mean. It just happen. Various.

Points. Of suffering. Health issues. Problems. Just bad things. And so. Steadfastness. Is how the Christian. Under the power of God. Because this is where he begins.

I'm praying. You will have. All power. All the power you need. According to his. Might. So that you will respond. To the bad things. That happen.

[17:32] In your life. And you will respond. With steadfastness. All right. Very. Very simple. Circumstantial. Suffering. We'll just call it that. The word.

Patience. Though. On the other hand. Refers to. How we respond. Again. Under the power of God. Both these things. Are under the power of God. According to the power of God.

Patience. Is how we are to respond. To bad people. Bad people. Or. Personal persecution. That comes. From other people. Are so.

Steadfastness. For the bad things. And patience. For the bad people. Bad things. And bad people. And. Put those together. And those. Are the things. That we. Have to deal with. In life.

Bad things. Bad people. Or wicked people. All right. Now. As a believer. Who wants to live. According.

[18:27] To God's word. And live. Live for Jesus. I can guarantee you. You can just mark it down. And I don't even have to say this. But you will. Experience.

Suffering. As God's people. You will. I tell you. Just as. Part of this creation. You will. Because this is a fallen creation.

And bad stuff is happening. And it's on the increase. And I can guarantee you. That as a Christian. You're not exempt. You will. Experience. Suffering. Because of.

Things. That happen. All right. And then I can also guarantee you. Based upon God's word. And also experience. That you will experience.

Persecution. As a believer. If you don't. Then you need to check out. Your spiritual identity. Are you really born again? And if you say. Yes I know I am.

[19:24] Then are you living for Jesus? Or are you living. As a lost person? And I don't think. A Christian can do that. For very long. And if you can. Just keep on living. Like a lost person. And escape.

All kinds of. Of persecution. Then I would say to you. You have no warrant. To believe you're saved. Because as a Christian. You will. Experience. Persecution. Because of your faith.

And you will. Do so. Because of certain people. In your life. That puts the two together. Second Timothy. Second Timothy. Chapter 3. Verse 12. All that will live godly. In Christ Jesus. Will. Suffer. Persecution. Do you know that verse? So might hear somebody. Finish that out for me. It's a guarantee. And so. Let's put this together. You see. Steadfastness. For things. Illness. Death.

[20 : 19] Poverty. Problems. Catastrophes. You know. Christians are not exempt. From these things. Patience.

For people. Persecution. Because of your Christian faith. Ridicule. Because of your Christianity. Double standards.

Against Christians. And we're experiencing. More and more of that. In our culture. Unfair. Oppressive laws. That are being put on the books.

That make it harder and harder. To live the Christian life. You know. We're not exempt from that. Physical and verbal abuse. And we could go on with the list. And so. Those are the two things. He says. You need the power of God for. So that you will respond. With steadfastness. To the things. That happen in life. The bad things. And. So that you will have patience.

[21 : 15] For the bad people. That you will. Confront in life. And that's Paul's point. As a Christian. We need the power of God. In order to respond.

In the right way. To the inevitable. Slash promised. Points of suffering. That we'll face.

In this life. And. How must we respond. To the things. We suffer. How are we to respond. With steadfastness.

What. What Peter said. I mean. Paul said. Peter's in the morning. Paul. Is that night. How do we respond.

With steadfastness. Bear up under them. These bad things. That happen. To not lose heart. To not be discouraged. To not be disillusioned.

[22 : 10] Not to give up. Say we need steadfastness. For that. It's the power of God. Operating in our lives. That gives us that steadfastness. And how. Must we as believers. Respond.

To people who persecute us. With. Patience. Patience. Not being easily. Provoked to anger. And wrath.

Not retaliating. Through a spirit of revenge. And so forth. Now. So let me ask you the question. Is this possible. Apart from God's power.

It's just not possible. You might be able to go a season. Or. Through an event. Not pray for God's help. Not.

Acknowledge the power you need from him. But you'll not learn anything from that. And eventually. You'll discover. That you cannot do it. Without God's power. Cannot do it. And it's vitally important.

[23 : 07] By the way. For the cause of Christ. On this earth. That. God's people. Live. According to the power of God. So that we can bear up.

Under suffering. And persecution. It's vitally important. That we bear it. That is. With steadfastness. And patience. It's vitally important. For the kingdom of God. For two reasons. At least. Really. Really.

Three. Three. And I'll name the first one. First. It's a good place. For the first one. To be mentioned. To glorify God. But there are two.

Very practical reasons. Why. We need God's power. Need to pray for God's power. So that we'll respond. With steadfastness. And patience. Two reasons. Number one. Because there's work. To be done. In the kingdom of God. And it cannot wait. Until. We have gone through. That season of suffering. Can I wait? There's things to be done. When we face problems.

[24 : 01] And we suffer. Whether. Because of things. Or people. We cannot just. Hunker down. And grin and bear it. And wait until the storm passes. There's work to be done.

Can't be put aside. There are ministries. To be. Involved in. And performed. And run. And souls. To be one. And it's so easy. To just let. Those things.

Go on hold. While we. Endure our times. Of suffering. There's work to be done. So we need. The power of God.

For steadfastness. And patience. We cannot. Just check out. On our Christian lives. For a season. While we're hurting. That's why we need to pray.

For this kind of power. That's why you need to pray. For your pastor. There are times. When pastors. Get in the doldrums. You know. These things happen. And people get cranky.

[24 : 57] And you know. And. Or in our own personal lives. Pastor has a. A family. And things happen. In his family. And you know. And there are other.

Health things. That may happen. And a pastor. Can. Kind of lose track. Of. Of God's calling. And his duty. To serve the Lord. And serve his church. And you need to pray.

For your pastor. That he. And his wife. That will have power. To. Respond. Steadfastly. And with patience. Because there's work. To be done.

And it cannot be put on hold. And as a church. Collectively. We need to understand. That this applies. Stuff happens in churches. Did you know that?

Hard thing. Tough thing. People get mad. And people leave. We go through a time.

[25 : 55] Where we're licking our wounds. And. Suddenly we realize. We wake up. And realize. That we've been so. Depressed. And discouraged. That the work. Is not being done.

You see. So. We need to pray this way. Pray for one another. That the power of God. Would rest upon us. So that we can respond. To the things.

That happen. And respond. Into steadfastness. And respond. To the people. That would attack us. And abuse us. And to respond.

With patience. There's a second reason. Why it's so important. To the. Kingdom of God. And that is. And I've already mentioned this. That there's always.

Someone looking. To see how a Christian. Responds. To personal suffering. You may. Think that no one knows. Or that no one's noticing.

[26 : 52] Or that no one cares. But there are unbelievers. That are watching you. There are unbelievers. In this community. Who are watching. Watching this church. You might.

Think that those people. Out here. In Bartlesville. They. They don't care about. Highland Park. So whatever happens. Inside these four walls. It's not. Any big deal to them.

But people are watching. People are watching. Your life. Personally. And they know it. When you are hurting. Or suffering. Or something has happened. In your life.

Especially those. Who would. Ridicule you. Or little jabs. You know. That they. Insert there. Because of your. Christian convictions.

And they are. Standing back. To watch. To see how you react. To that. And so we need. To react. With steadfastness. And patience. Because people are watching.

[27 : 49] They. Evaluate. The reality. Of your testimony. Reality. Of what you witness. Based on how you react. To things.

I'll never forget about. Hearing about this pastor. Who. Was preaching. One Sunday morning. And after the service. Was over. He. Standing by the door.

And shaking people's hands. And. As a lot of pastors do. Although I haven't quite decided. Which door to stand by. I guess I'll know. Who liked the sermon. And who didn't.

You know. If they go out this door. They didn't like it. Or they don't like me. If they go out this door. I'm just kidding. Where was I? Oh.

There was this pastor. I heard about. And anyway. He's standing there. By the door. And people are filing out. Shaking his hand. And one. Dear. Sweet. Lady.

[28 : 44] In the church. Poke. Picked. Rather. That time. To criticize. Her pastor. To his face. And she.

Just. Unloaded. On him. Something. About what he had preached. Or maybe it was something. About what he did. Or did not do. Or whatever it was. I don't remember. The substance of it.

But she just. Lambasted him. There at the doorway. And so. She walked on through. The next fellow in line.

Was a visitor. To the church. And he took that pastor. By the hand. And he was weeping. And. He said to the pastor.

Can. Can. I speak with you. Privately. And so. They. Went off into a little room. Sat down. And this man.

[29 : 43] Said to the preacher. He said. I need to be saved. I just need to be saved. So the pastor. Shared the gospel. With him.

And this man. Got on his knees. With that pastor. And prayed. And trusted Christ. As his Lord. And Savior. Is gloriously saved. And afterward. The pastor. Asked the man.

He said. What was it this morning. That just really. Touched your heart. Was it the sermon. And he said. No. It wasn't the sermon. Was it.

Some. Part of the worship service. That convinced you. That you were lost. And he said. No. He said. Well what was it. He said. I stood in line.

As that lady. Was. Balling you out. And I watched. To see how you were going to respond. And I watched.

[30 : 36] And heard you. Call her by name. And tell her. That you loved her. And you blessed her. And I was convinced.

Right now. Smitten in my heart. And whatever you had. I don't have. Or didn't have. See people are watching. You. You. You know that.

Don't you. Where you work. People watch you. And if your boss. Gets cranky with you. Or. Gives you a cut in pay. Or. You know. Or. Even lays you off.

There are people watching. To see how you react to that. Now those things. Are not good things. They're not things. That we. Enjoy. And. We don't always. Pass that test.

Do we. And so that's why. We need to pray. For one another. In this way. How important. A prayer this is. That. The power of God. Would rest upon us.

[31 : 31] His power. All the power. We need. So that we can react. To the things. With steadfastness. And so that we can react. To the people. With patience. And observable.

Patience. There's one more. An obtainable power. That is to continually. Produce in us. An observable patience.

And the. To result. Or rather the result. Or that results. In. An obvious. Praise. In our lives.

Tell you. We. Better pay close attention. What. Paul says here. In verse 11. That last. Word. There. It really.

Leads over. Into the next. Verse. Verse 12. And in a sense. It ties in. To the next. Element of the prayer.

[32 : 30] Which. Is worship. And yet. It is included. Here in verse. 11. Because it goes. With what he said. Here. About steadfastness. And patience. He said.

Joyously. Joyously. Now. This is where. It's really hard. I mean. This is. This is the part. Of. What Paul. Is praying. This is. A part. Of what he says. Needs to be. Your Christian. Experience. That. Really. We have a hard time. Understanding. It's not very easy.

To be joyful. When you're suffering. It's not very easy. When people are. Are. Persecuting you. Because of your Christian convictions.

Hard to be joyful. That's what he said. Joyously. It was. A television. Series. Called. Get smart. One of my favorites. When I was a kid. I guess.

[33 : 28] I still kind of like it. Every time I see it. Get smart. You know that. That old TV show. That kind of spoof. On. Secret agents. You know. Get well. Get smart. Is.

You know. Maxwell smart. Agent 86. Makes you want to go home. Or. Maybe. Tune in to Netflix. Or. Hulu. On the internet. And bring up. I mean.

You can get it there. You know. Watch it. Well anyway. It certainly. You'd have to admit. Was a. Cornball show. Where. Every episode.

Contained. You know. Kind of repetition. Of. Of. Routines. And. Repetition. Of. Dialogues. Little. Little bit. You know. Comic bits.

And things like that. And one of the. The. Typical ones. Would be when. Maxwell smart. You know. Has been captured. Or he's. About to go on.

[34 : 22] One of these. Dangerous missions. And. Either the chief. Or one of the. Chaos. Agents. Would. You know. Begin to. Tell him. Describe for him. All the terrible things.

Are going to happen to him. They're going to do this to you. And we're going to do that to you. And we're going to do that. And this. And that. And so forth. And what does he say. And. Loving it.

You remember that. Crazy. I know that didn't sound. Like. Don Adams. The name. Don. And. I know.

That's kind of a crude illustration. What Paul's talking about here. And yet. We. Can. And. Sometimes. And oftentimes. Find ourselves. Bearing up.

Under. A load. Of. Suffering. And. Persecution. Only. To allow. The. So-called. Patience. And. Long. Suffering. And. Steadfastness. In our lives. To produce.

[35 : 19] A kind of a gloominess. You know. A kind of. Sourness. In our spirits. You know. Christians. Can. Become. Some of the most. Sour people.

You'd ever want to meet. Much as sour pussers. You know. And we just kind of wear. A downcast countenance. Sometimes. If we're not. Careful. Because of our hardships. And our sufferings. And we. Kind of wear it. As if it were some kind of. A badge of honor. You know. It's just kind of the way we are. I mean. I can see it coming. I can see people. I can see the face of suffering.

Coming. I've learned not to ask. Certain people. How they're doing. Because they're going to tell me. And they're rather proud of it. But they don't even have to tell me.

Because I can see it on their faces. You know. Like Adrian Rogers. Used to say. Some people look like. The advanced agent. For the undertaker. You know. Bible in one arm.

[36 : 15] And a bottle of iodine. One and the other. You know. Something like that. It's crazy.

That's not the way it's supposed to be. Not according to the Bible. Not according to Jesus.

In fact. In Matthew 5. 10. Jesus said. Blessed. Are they. Which are persecuted. For righteousness sake.

Blessed are they. For theirs. Is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed. Are you. When men. Shall revile you. And persecute you.

And shall say. All manner of evil. Against you. Falsely. Against you. Falsely. For my sake. Rejoice. He said. Rejoice. And be exceedingly glad.

For great. Is your reward. In heaven. For so. Persecuted. They the prophets. Which were before you. Or we might. Listen to Peter. And we'll get to these passages.

[37 : 15] On Sunday morning. Eventually. But first Peter chapter. Three. Verse fourteen. Peter describes there. The countenance. That ought to be. Obvious. Obvious.

On the face. Of those who are suffering. Suffering believers. First Peter. Chapter three. Verse fourteen. But. And if. Ye suffer. For righteousness sake. Who can finish that?

Happy. Are you? Happy. Are you? What? That's what he said. First Peter.

Four. Four. Four. Four. If ye be reproached. For the name of Christ. Happy. Are ye. For the spirit. Of glory. And of God. Resteth upon you. You see.

Listen. We're not talking here. About it. Peter's not. And Jesus is not. And Paul here. Is not talking about. A superficial. Kind of happiness. You know. Just putting on.

[38 : 11] A happy face. Kind of thing. Or. Some kind of act. Some kind of put on. This. This is a. Real. Joyful. Outlook.

On life. No matter. What the circumstances. That's what. He's talking about. Here. That's why. He's praying. For them.

In this way. And that's why. You and I. Ought to pray for one another. In this way. Because this is something. That must be real. Not just.

Enduring. Under it. But doing so. And loving it. At the same time. Pretty hard.

Isn't it? You see. Christian joy. Is more than just. Feeling good. About life. And. And. And about the things. That. When things are up.

[39 : 05] I mean. It's much more than that. Christian joy. Is something. That flows from the heart. It's a. It's a confidence. In the fact. That God. Is always with me. And always for me.

To strengthen me. And to enable me. You know. To be patient. And to. Patiently endure. The things that happen to me. And to do so. Victoriously.

And joyously. But. Some will say. You don't know. What I'm facing. As a Christian. Pretty easy for you.

Preacher. You know. Be up there. And just talking about this. But you don't have any idea. What's happening in my life. You don't know. About the persecution. That I face every day. In my workplace.

Little jabs. That people make. Little. Little snickers. Little comments. About. My Christianity. And you know. And when. Someone tells a dirty joke. And I don't laugh. And it's. Oh. Miss.

[40 : 00] Miss. Goody. Two shoes. Over there. You just don't know. The kind of persecution. I'm facing. You know. I wonder. What if. The Apostle Paul.

Were allowed to come back. And. And suddenly. The Apostle Paul. Standing here. Or better yet. What if the Apostle Paul. You were allowed to have. A personal. Visit.

With the Apostle Paul. Paul. And. You know. To give you the opportunity. To just tell him. How hard it is. To live. As a Christian. Here. In America. Wouldn't that be funny?

Well. It wouldn't be funny. Matter of fact. In 2nd Corinthians. Chapter 11. Verse 23. Real quickly. I'll just read this. We discover.

That Paul knew. A thing or two. About persecution. He said. I speak. As. If insane. I'm more so. If. Far more.

[41 : 01] Labors. In far more. Labors. He worked hard. Far more. Imprisonments. He was. Imprisoned. More than any. Of these others. That were. Serving the Lord. At the time. Beaten.

Times. Without number. Of the way. That's translated. He couldn't even. Couldn't even. Number. The times. He was beaten. Often. In danger.

Of death. Five times. I received. From the Jews. Thirty nine lashes. That's just one short. Of the forty. And usually. Forty. Was enough. To kill you. And he said. Five times.

Thirty nine lashes. Three times. I was beaten. With rods. Once. I was stoned. Three times. I was shipwrecked. A night. And a day. I have spent. In the deep.

I have been. On frequent. Journeys. And dangers. From rivers. And dangers. From robbers. Dangers. From my countrymen. Dangers. From the Gentiles. Dangers. In the city.

[41 : 55] Dangers. In the wilderness. Dangers. On the sea. Dangers. Among false brethren. And on. And on. He goes. I think. Paul. Knew a thing or two. About persecution. And can you imagine.

A dialogue. With Paul. About your personal. Sufferings. And persecutions. See. There's nothing. Though. Quite so effective.

For the cause. Of Christianity. Than a Christian. Living in victory. In spite. Of their sufferings. And their persecutions.

And I say to you. Well. Paul says to you. It takes. The power. Of God. Operating. In your life. To be. The kind of believer. You need to be. That can stand up. In the midst. Of persecution. And suffering.

And do it. Joyously. Joyously.

[42 : 50] And really. To live. To live. The way. Paul described. In. Romans. Eight. And I'll.

Finish with this verse. Romans. Eight. Sixteen. The spirit himself. Testifies. With our spirit.

That we are children of God. And if children. Heirs. Also. Heirs of God. And fellow heirs. With Christ. If.

Indeed. We. Suffer. With him. So that we may also be. Glorified. With him. For I consider. That the sufferings.

Of this present time. Are not worthy. To be compared. With the glory. That is to be revealed. In us. For the anxious. Longing. Of the creation.

[43 : 44] Waits. Eagerly. For the revealing. Of the sons of God. Would you pray. For me. That I.

Would have. The power of God. In my life. So that I can. Respond. With steadfastness. And patience. To the.

Sufferings. And persecutions. That will surely. Come in my life. And to do so. Join us. Would you promise.

To pray for me then. I'll promise. To pray for you. Thank you.