

Characteristics of a Useful Vessel

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Date: 03 November 2014

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[0:00] So let's get started.

Ask y'all a question. You don't have to yell out an answer. Just think about it. As a follower of Christ, what is your desire?

You know, what do you want to accomplish for God on this earth before he either calls you home to be with him physically or takes the church home to be with him physically?

Those are questions you can think about. And I've been a Christian a long time, but I've never considered those questions certainly at any length. But I would suggest to you, to you all, that the compelling desire of every believer in every age should be to be used of God in the manner that he chooses.

That should drive us. Lord, what do you want me to do? And get that identified, particularly you young guys, get it, get identified early.

[1:22] I'm almost 67. I'm still working on that. Like Diane says, she doesn't know what I'm going to do when I grow up, you know. We started this chapter with the call to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

That's in the second chapter of 2 Timothy. From there we were commanded to be a workman who does not need to be ashamed. And all this brought us to verse 21, to be useful to the master prepared for every good work.

Dr. MacArthur refers to this portion of scripture as a call to be honorable vessels in service to the Lord.

And in this chapter 2 of 2 Timothy, starting in verse 20, we're going to see an illustration. Now, in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

Paul, more than any of the other New Testament writers, uses examples like vessels to describe believers.

[2:45] In fact, in his letter to the Romans, in Romans 9.21, which is where he defends God's sovereign right to both save and condemn, he says this, Does not the potter have a right over the clay?

To make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use. After all, he's the potter. And he can mold the clay any way he wants to mold it.

Paul reminded the Corinthian church about the enabling power of God, and he used these words, We have this treasure in earthen vessels, there's that word again, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

2 Corinthians 4.7. And in our passage tonight, in the illustration, Paul uses the example of a large house.

And in that culture, obviously the owners are affluent. It implies there are many people living in a multi-room house.

[3:59] It contains furnishings. He mentions gold, silver, wood, earthenware. And then he says some of these were for honorable use and others for dishonorable.

Now, it appears in most of the guys I read that the reference to a large house is a reference to the church. And we are.

We're a large house. Jonathan and I had lunch today. We were talking about, among other things, the rapture, which I caught on in here yesterday morning. And I said, you know, it's so interesting. Some people say, well, the church has got to go through some pre-wrath to make itself worthy for heaven. Guys, we're the caboose of the church. We're just bringing up the rear end.

The vast majority of the church is with the Lord tonight. Starting, you know, basically at Pentecost. And if you read Acts, there were martyrs real quickly.
[4:57] Stephen, for instance. Most of the church is in heaven. We're just bringing up the rear end. But we think in terms of this large house as the church.

It is not an individual church, but the entire church, the body of Christ composed of genuine believers. In our example, vessels are individual believers that make up the body of Christ. And it's interesting because Paul says there were honorable vessels of gold and silver. There were dishonorable vessels of wood and earthenware. Within a house, obviously gold and silver are more valuable than the vessels of wood and earthenware.

That's obvious. And it is important to note that honor and dishonor used here, and I really had to correct my thinking on this, does not refer to true believers as opposed to false believers. The Lord Jesus does that elsewhere using other examples. He used, for example, the example of wheat and tares to describe that which is true and that which is false.

[6:12] When he teaches about the judgment, he uses the sheep and the goats as a reference to the saved and to the lost. The visible church on earth contains both believers and unbelievers.

In our example in 2 Timothy, Paul is not speaking of these in terms of comparisons. So what's he talking about? The vessels of honor in context represent believers who are faithful and useful to the cause of Christ.

These are the good soldiers who serve the commander faithfully. These are the competitive athletes who have run the race well.

These are the hardworking farmers who get up early and stay with it until the job is done. And then there are vessels of dishonor.

Who are these? Well, they can be a cowardly soldier. They can be a lazy athlete or a slothful farmer. They are saved but fit for the most menial and undistinguished purposes.

[7:26] Honor and dishonor refer to the ways in which genuine followers of Christ are found useful to the Lord in fulfilling the work he has called each of us to do.

Now, in no way does this imply that we should ever be satisfied to be anything other than vessels of honor. We should strive to be vessels of honor.

Paul knew that Timothy was in the midst of a tremendous struggle in the church at Ephesus. They were plagued with false teachers who were being led by Hymenius, Alexander, and Philetus. Paul had already denounced them twice in his letters to Timothy. So Paul is addressing this to Timothy, the leader of the church, and the faithful men he was instructing.

And they're going to carry on after Paul's gone and Paul's departure is approaching. And he's writing this from prison, by the way. Now, as we look at verses 21 to 26, we're going to answer the question, how can we be vessels of honor?

[8:38] Because that's what we're going to strive for, vessels of honor. And Paul is going to point out to us nine characteristics that are the marks of the godly believer that God wants us to be.

These are the vessels of honor spoken of in our text. And we're going to examine all nine of them. If you, for any reason, do not find yourself in one of these or a few of these or any of these, then go to God.

Talk to him about it. Go to him in genuine repentance, if that's what it's called for, and ask him to change you. Ask him to turn you into a vessel of honor.

That was my prayer at 1 o'clock this morning. First thing we're going to look at, and this is Paul, a cleansed life.

A cleansed life. Therefore, verse 21, the first part of that, Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel of honor.

[9:54] Well, that's interesting. The root word there for cleanses is from the English word where we get catharsis. It refers to a cleaning out or a complete purging of oneself.

It's not just dusting yourself off. What do we cleanse ourselves from? Well, the answer is from these things.

Okay, well, what is that? These things are a reference to vessels of dishonor. The faithful man cleanses and purges himself from those things which are dishonorable.

And we're going to have to get to those things by way of the things that are not dishonorable but are honorable. And that's how we're going to get there. We do know that within the church there are truly saved people that are leading impure lives for the moment.

And we all battle sin. Live in unredeemed flesh. The world, the flesh, and the devil. We're at war. There are people that are not submissive to the Lord. There are people that are not eager to serve Christ or the church.

[11:06] And the problem is that sin is contagious. And that is why we are called to be separated from it.

It's contagious. Isaiah said that we should touch nothing unclean and get away from such things and purify ourselves.

Isaiah 52, 11. The greatest danger in any church is a believing leader that is morally or doctrinally corrupt.

They are much more dangerous than pagans or even atheists. Because people put their trust in what he's saying and what he's doing. They want to pattern their lives after him.

Weak brothers see such men and assume since they are in leadership, then they must be blessed of God and we need to follow them. And the landscape is full of those guys that have fallen by the wayside.

[12:04] We had some fall this year. And we've had them fall over the years. Paul had to deal with in the Corinthian church. I'm most amazed that a whole wing of the church bases their doctrine on the Corinthian church.

That's probably the worst church you ever want to base your doctrine on. But in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 9 to 13, he says this. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people.

I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world or with the covetous or swindlers or with idolaters. For then you would have to go out into the world. You've got to go out there in the world and find them.

But actually I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person or covetous or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or a swindler.

Not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges.

[13:09] Remove the wicked man from among yourselves. You know, the Corinthian church was so messed up. They even had a guy sleeping, and some say with his stepmother, some say with his mother, with his whatever, but mother-in-law.

Now, let me just say in passing, if you ever hear that about me, just take this gun and shoot me. That would be the furthest thing from my mind.

It was a messed up church. And it may be difficult, depending upon your circumstance, but faithful service to the Lord requires separation from anyone who might corrupt you into sin.

Weak brothers are susceptible to such unholy, unhealthy relationships. Jeremiah used to warn godly Israelites to steer clear of ungodly Israelites.

He told them that many times. No Christian is to associate with professing Christians that are living a life that is morally and spiritually defiling.

[14:22] They are not just overtly, these are not just overtly sinful people. It can include those who have a very critical spirit that tolerate evil in their life and whose commitment to the Lord is shallow and artificial.

Vessels of honor, if we're to be that, we cannot run the risk of being turned into vessels of dishonor by association. That's the message.

The next thing we look at is a sanctified soul. Now, that's the next characteristic of a vessel of honor. It's being sanctified. It is from the Greek word *hagiazō*, meaning to set apart or be set apart. A sanctified Christian is a set-apart Christian. And he's set apart in two ways. Set apart from sin and set apart for God. So we have a negative and a positive.

From sin and unto God. We are to be vessels of righteousness dedicated solely to God. The great Old Testament example of this was the vessels set apart in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

[15:38] They were not used for mundane purposes. They were dedicated to God's service. Now, when you were saved, when you were justified by Christ, you then began a life of sanctification.

And I've said before, anybody that is not being sanctified at some level needs to go back and make sure they were justified. Because everybody that's been justified is on sanctification highway.

And remember, as I've said before, we all move at different speeds, okay? Don't be critical of the brothers that are way out in front of you or way behind you. Every genuine believer travels at a different rate on the highway of sanctification.

But every true believer is on that highway. There's no such thing as a Christian being justified and then stopping and saying, that's good enough for me.

I don't want anything to do with sanctification. That brother or friend or whatever you want to call him will go right back into the world. He'll go right back into the muck and mire. It is God's will that we be sanctified.

[16 : 55] The truly sanctified life is one of purity, holiness, and godliness. Why is that? Well, who are we being made into the image of?

It's Christ who was pure, holy, and godly. And let me say, in this life, it is the striving. Don't worry about the arriving.

We're in the business of striving. We strive for these things. And that way, we are vessels of honor. Wesley thought he could arrive.

And Wesley finally admitted late in life, even on his deathbed, I never achieved it. But he strove. And we are to strive. We're to be busy striving.

Our life as a believer is to be radically different from what our life was as an unbeliever. Just look back and examine yourself. Are you different?

[17 : 54] If there's been no change, go back and examine your salvation. Make sure you're in the body of Christ. Honorable vessels are to be separated from sin, the world, the flesh, the devil, and self-will of the old self.

And we are to strive to be vessels of honor. Next, vessels of honor are useful to God. We are useful to God. Be useful to the master.

A vessel of honor can be used by God. That was Paul's desire from the very core of his heart. He wanted to be used by God to further his kingdom.

In 1 Corinthians 9, 24 and 25, he said, I want to run the race because I want to win. And we look at that and say, oh, wow, that's kind of... No, that's a positive.

He wanted to win the race. He wanted to win the boxing match. Paul said his greatest fear, and this always just is a testimony, his greatest fear was that by his actions or his inaction, he would one day be disqualified from serving the master.

[19 : 15] Greatest fear he ever had, that he would be disqualified. And that should be our fear as well. That should be our fear as well. Another way we're going to be vessels of honor is that we're prepared for good works.

Verse 21 says, be prepared for every good work. The concept here is to be willing, eager, and ready to engage in good works for the Lord.

When we were saved, God sent his spirit to live in us, thus placing us in a state. We're empowered for every good work that God has for us.

You've got the power to accomplish. In this regard, I love, of course, Ephesians, and we're going through that on Wednesdays. I love Ephesians 2.10, but we usually memorize chapter 2, verses 8 and 9.

Most of us know that, but we start short of 10. Don't stop short. Memorize all three verses. Let me read them to you. By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

[20 : 32] It is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Pretty plain there. Saved by grace, not of works.

We'll go bragging. Well, I got more saved than you. Well, yeah, but he's more saved than both of us put together. You know, we have no grounds to boast. But then verse 10 comes in, which we don't often memorize.

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus. Why were we created in Christ Jesus? For good works.

Well, Lord, which ones? Which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. That's why you're a believer still here on this earth.

God's got stuff for you all to do. When that runs out, you won't be here. And when it really runs out, none of us will be here. When we have nothing else to do right now, we've all got work to do.

[21 : 35] We're still here. We are saved by grace through faith. By the way, it's not your faith. It's the faith God gives you. To do good works that God has set out beforehand.

He's set it before us. We've been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do those good works. Why? So that God is honored and the body of Christ is edified.

It's built up. That's why we do that. Well, how are we to serve? How can we serve? Service comes by way of submission.

We're to be submissive. We submit to His Spirit to be used by His power. Is it your desire to be used by God?

That is one of the characteristics of being a vessel of honor. Vessels of honor want to be used by God to do the good works that God has planned beforehand.

[22 : 41] Another thing on this vessel of honor is the vessel of honor has a pure heart. Now, I'm meddling in my own life even. I'm going to meddling. Verse 22. Now, flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

And here's the meat of the whole lesson tonight. To be a vessel of honor, you must have a pure heart. And how are you going to do that?

Paul mentions five characteristics of a pure heart in this verse of Scripture. And where did Paul get this? From the Spirit of God.

So the Holy Spirit gave him these. Five characteristics to attain a pure heart. And let me say parenthetically, in our day, boy, it's a battle, isn't it?

It is a battle. Flee youthful lusts. There we have the first characteristic. The Greek word for flee here is where we get the English word for fugitive.

[23 : 59] And we pretty much know what the fugitive is, right? We watch the movie The Fugitive. I deal with fugitives from time to time, or my guys do. That is a person continually on the run.

That's what a fugitive is. We are to be constantly running from sinful passions that started when we were young.

Now, I don't know how to define young there. I'm almost 67. I think 23 is probably young. I got assigned to the pornography squad. I worked pornography in Fort Worth, Texas.

Day and night. Flee youthful lusts. So I could hit a delete button. Someone tell me, where's the delete button on that? Flee youthful lusts.

Next characteristics of a pure heart. Righteousness. By the way, I didn't do it voluntarily. I was a detective. I was a police officer. Righteousness. Yeah, I thought I was single.

[25 : 01] I thought I was unsaving. This is the greatest assignment anyone can get. After three days, I wanted to throw up. I mean, it was a hard work and nasty. Righteousness.

We run from sin. But you know when you run from something, you run to something, don't you? We run from sin and we run toward righteousness.

And again, brothers, it is the striving. We strive for righteousness. You say, well, I'm not going to experience full righteousness in my lifetime.

I'm not going to arrive in this lifetime. Strive. Strive. There is only one way to live a righteous life.

There's only one way. And if you don't do it this way, you're not even going to strive.

And that is through obedience to the Word of God. That's the only way. Now, that leads to step two of this.

[26 : 03] The only way to do that is to immerse ourselves in the Word of God and know what He expects us to obey through His commandments.

And I would never do this to you, but can you imagine right now getting a piece of paper and being, I'll give you, I'll give you 20 minutes to write down 25 commands of the Lord.

Or 10 or 5 or 1, you know. The truth is we don't really know the commands. There's like 600 of them. And they're not burdensome. Jesus said, my yoke is easy.

But we need to know what the commandments are so that we can run toward righteousness through obedience to the Word.

Next trait, characteristic, faith. Those who live godly in Christ Jesus will pursue faith. Used here, it is actually the word faithfulness.

[27 : 03] The New Testament guys translated it faith, but it's really more closely akin to faithfulness. That is another word for trusting or trustworthiness.

That's what faith is, trust, commitment. When we are faithful, we are going to be loyal to God, loyal to His Word, loyal to His work, and to His people in the church.

That just fits, that's handing love right there. That's living the life of faithfulness. That's what we've been called to do. Another trait is love. This is the first one mentioned and the foremost of the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5.22.

As you can imagine, the word used there is agape. That is the highest form of love. It's higher than phileo, which is a brotherly love, or I like you a whole bunch.

It's, I've told you before, city of Philadelphia, phileo-delphia, city of brotherly love. I've been there. It's not. But it's where they arrested some Christians about five years ago because they were singing gospel hymns on a street corner.

[28:18] Finally, a judge woke up and said, what? Next to the Liberty Bell and he arrested these guys. It was crazy. This is sacrificial love.

This level of love we're talking about here, that we are striving to have a pure heart, this is sacrificial. This is the level of love. And the best example we have is that willingly goes to a cross for a people who do not deserve it.

That's the level of love we're talking about here as we strive to have a pure heart. And then, peace. The final characteristic of a pure heart is to pursue peace.

It is the same word for serene or serenity. It refers to harmonious relationships between God and men, between men and men, and especially among Christians.

We're to be at peace. That means we don't argue over the color of carpet. You know? Paul told us to be at peace with all men as much as it depends upon us.

[29:34] And if we're to be vessels of honor, we have to pursue a pure heart. The next characteristic is a discerning mind.

You want to be a vessel of honor, you have to have a discerning mind. But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

That's where quarrels come from, from foolish and ignorant speculations. To be vessels of honor, we must guard our minds.

If we do not, they will be filled. Nature abhors a vacuum. They will be filled with lust, deceit, misunderstanding, confusion.

The list goes on and on and on. If our minds are not on guard, that is when false doctrine can come in and mislead us.

[30:37] We've got to be Bereans. Yeah, we heard the sermon, Sonny. It sounds right. Let's go home and look at the Word of God and make sure the pastor was on point. Yeah, he was. He's batting 100%.

He's batting 100%. That's a lot easier when you're an expository preacher than a speculative preacher. I made that word up. I've heard a lot of speculative guys in my life.

Don't use that. I'm going to copyright that one. When we are then subject to being tossed here and there by waves.

We're like thrown into the ocean and we're just tossed to and fro. We are to examine everything carefully that passes for having come from God.

John said it this way in the epistles. You know, test the spirits. Test every spirit. We had a guy in here one night. Won't hit it very hard. We've talked about it before.

[31:44] But I met with him privately. And James, you did too. And he told me some things about himself. And I said, I'm commanded to test you. He said he was an angel sent from the Lord to Highland Park to get money.

And I said, well, I'm going to test you. But you've already told me when you were born, your mother's name, your wife's name, that you're now divorced but you're getting remarried to another woman and you hope to have children.

That is inconsistent with biblical references, information to angels. And you failed the test. And about that time the bus pulled up and said, I've got to go.

I said, okay. Never let anyone tell you they have a word from God. You know, these guys will do that. I have a word for you from God.

Unless it squares with Scripture. And if it doesn't square with Scripture, don't believe it. Because God's not giving any new revelation.

[32:54] And he's not an author of confusion. I'm going to say one thing to one church body and something else to another. That conflicts. Now, we've already studied this pretty strongly in 1 Timothy.

Let me review some key passages here. 1 Timothy 1, verses 3-6. 2 Timothy 1, verses 3-7.

Not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies which give rise to mere speculation, rather than furthering the administration of God, which is by faith.

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, there's that word again, and a good conscience and a sincere faith. There's that word again. For some men straying from these things have turned aside to fruitless discussions.

I never recommend you listen to certain Christian radio, so-called Christian radio, but it's fruitless discussions. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 3 to 5, If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing.

[34 : 23] But he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

I remember when I was young in the church, can godliness? I remember when I was young in the church, the question was, can god make a rock so big he can't lift it? And I came up with the perfect answer to that.

Yes, he can, and then he can lift it. And I said, and your question is still foolish. How many angels can sit on the head of a pin?

I don't know. 1 Timothy chapter 6, verses 20 and 21. Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. I bet he would say tonight, Jerry, Mike, Johnny, Jonathan, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and thus gone astray from the faith.

To be a vessel of honor, we are to have a discerning mind. We're also to have a gentle manner. A gentle manner.

[35 : 48] Verse 24, 2 Timothy chapter 2. And the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged.

I was thinking of Joanne Farmer. We got her a poster one time. She was an elderly member here. That proverb says, better to live on the corner of your roof than with a quarrelsome woman. We gave that to her one time for her husband to hang up.

Bondservant is the word *doulos*, meaning slave. I highly recommend you get a copy of John MacArthur's book, *Slave*, and read it. If we would be vessels of honor, we the slaves of Christ, and don't think of slavery in terms of American slavery.

It's different. But if we're to be the slaves of Christ the way he wants us, we must not be quarrelsome. We are instead to be kind.

These attributes epitomized our Lord during his incarnation. He was all those things. We're to be bold when speaking of Christ to this very Christ-rejecting world.

[37 : 02] I saw a little picture of that yesterday in that video in Syria. At the same time, our boldness must be exercised in meekness, gentleness, and humility.

We're never to be harsh or abusive when telling about Christ, when talking about Christ. We're never to be unkind, to be thoughtless. Paul told the Thessalonians they were to be as gentle as nursing mothers.

Doesn't get any more gentle than that. Vessels of honor are to be patient when wronged. We're never to be vindictive towards others.

We're to be patient, and that comes as a grace gift from God. We're to serve the Lord in a gentle manner without vengeance or anger or bitterness. Stephen, the first martyr of the church, is a great example of this.

Even in death, he was gracious, kind, and patient. And he even forgave his murderers and asked the Lord to do the same. Don't hold this charge against them.

[38 : 09] We're also to have a humble spirit. Bible translators called it gentleness. Gentleness can also be rendered meekness.

And let me say this to you. And I don't think this is original of me, but I'd like to claim it. Meekness is never weakness. Okay?

Meekness is never weakness. If you've never heard that, give me credit. If you've heard it, then let your conscience be your guide. Meekness, far from weakness, is power under control.

Power under control. Who's the supreme example of that? Christ. Jesus. You know, these people are doing all kinds of things to him.

Do you realize what he could have done? I mean, when I see the passion for the Christ in those beatings, I want to say, Lord, take those guys out.

[39:13] Here's an Uzi. Jesus is the supreme example. He could have destroyed his enemies with a mere word from his mouth.

He could have called down legions of angels. One angel killed like 185,000, was it Philistines, with the jawbone of a donkey?

I don't know if your boy is still awake. A donkey? Can you imagine legions? A legion of 6,000? And he could have called down multiple legions? Instead, what did the Lord do?

He endured embarrassment, pain, suffering, torture for his own children. He endured living on this planet among sinners for our sakes.

We are to exercise the same meekness or gentleness that the Lord exercised. That means we are to have a spirit that is kind and gentle.

[40:15] Remember, we're trying to be vessels of honor, right? Kind and gentle. Let's face it. You don't get very far in this world with those kind of attributes. You don't find those sorts of people sitting in boardrooms.

And you Phillips guys, I was there 10 years, you won't find them sitting in our boardroom. I knew those guys, traveled with them. I'll never forget when I was actively working, we had the opportunity for Billy Graham to be in this town.

And he wondered about the possibility of speaking to the board of directors. They were in town about China because Billy Graham knows a lot about China. Ruth served there, I guess, as a missionary. And I was the one that carried the water to the executives to float that idea.

And they looked at me like I was from Mars. Why would we want to do that? He doesn't know anything he could teach us. Wow, he knew a lot he could teach us. We're to place ourselves under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

We are to submit to his instruction contained in his word. We are to seek to do his will. We are to put him first in all things and be vessels of honor.

[41:32] That's what we're to do. We're also to have a compassionate attitude. A compassionate attitude. Verse 25 to 26.

Correcting those who are in opposition. If perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

This is the last attribute we shall cover for becoming a vessel of honor. An honorable vessel will have a compassionate attitude.

Paul speaks of correcting those who are in opposition. Well, who in the Ephesian church needed correcting? And that's false teachers. They were infecting the Ephesian church.

Not me. And, you know, let's face it. They did a pretty good job because what happens to the Ephesian church once you get to Revelation? It's a disaster.

[42:43] Paul speaks of correcting those who are in opposition. That might sound just like it. That is the false teachers that so plagued the church in that day. In our day, it's even worse.

John says, hey, in the last days, there are going to be all kinds of false prophets, false teachers.

Jesus said the same thing in Matthew. They needed correcting. The goal in their correction was that they would repent of that great sin of theirs and become useful vessels of honor.

When repentance is genuine, people are led out of disobedience. True repentance is ultimately a grace gift from God.

Vessels of honor understand that. It's all by grace, the grace of God. It's a grace gift. When that happens, we escape the snare of the devil.

Prior to that happening, men are held captive by him to do the will of the devil. It is a frightening thing that the devil can capture and hold on to people and at times even children of God.

[43:51] Now, the only way you can do that is by the permissive will of God. God will turn him over for a season for correction. Well, there's good news in all this. God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can handle.

And I have to tell you, in my life, I've had things happen. I say, Lord, I've read that scripture. I believe it. But you give me more than I can handle right now. Three days later, I realize, hey, the sun's still coming up.

I'm still here. And it was handled. I told you before, John MacArthur says he doesn't worry about things that are happening in your life that are bad. They're going to go away and be replaced by something worse.

You know, in this life, you will have tribulation. In the world, you will have tribulation. Be of good cheer. I've overcome the world. Not me, not John, not Paul, Jesus. Lord knows how to rescue his children from temptation.

He also knows how to turn a vessel of dishonor into a vessel of honor by cleansing us from unrighteousness. So here we have tonight nine attributes or characteristics of vessels of honor.

[45 : 05] A cleansed life, a sanctified soul, one who is useful to God, prepared for service, having a pure heart, having a discerning mind, a gentle manner, a humble spirit, and a compassionate attitude.

With those operating in your life, striving on those nine points, you can be vessels of honor. And I'd urge you to really carefully consider this section of Scripture.

Thank you.