Zechariah - Commentaries by Paul L Johnson

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It's turned to the prophet Zechariah. Zechariah chapter 4 and the Angel that talked with me came again. And wait to me as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked. And behold a Candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps which are upon the top thereof. And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and speak to the Angel that talked with me, saying, What are these my Lord? That the Angel that talked with me answered, and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord. Then he answered and spoken to me, saying, This is the word of the Lord undesirable, saying, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shall become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying grace, grace unto it. Moreover, the word of the Lord came into me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house. His hands shall also finish it, And thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you, for who hath despised the day of small things? For they should rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven. They are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth. Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the Candlestick? And upon the left side thereof. And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches, which through the golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered to me and said, Knowest thou not what thee be? And I said, No, my Lord Then said he, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. We've been taking up Zechariah in connection with the ministry of encouragement and help. For the feeble remnant returned to Jerusalem, building once again the House of God in the place. Of God's appointment, the divine center. And here in this 4th chapter we have brought before us. Principally, I believe the leading thought in this 4th chapter. We have brought before us the vessel of testimony. And the power that God supplies. To furnish. The light for this? We might say that the key to it is in verse six, the end of the verse, not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit. Saith the Lord of Hosts. That the work was not human. And the testimony was not man's, and so therefore the power. In which the work was to be carried on, and the testimony was to be carried out was to be divine by the Spirit of God, and not by human. Power or human strength is the leading thought. But now you'll notice in the beginning of the chapter in verse one. The Angel waked Zechariah as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. Now that I have no doubt but what these circumstances are full of meaning. I don't say that we're able always to attach a meaning to every one of the circumstances. Maybe someone has more light on it than I have, but I do believe that. Everything in the Word of God is important. There are no superfluous words. And sometimes we we can learn something from the Lord by taking an account of a little circumstance like this. He was as a man that was wakened out of his sleep. So this would speak to us that the vision that Zechariah is going to have here is in connection with a time of awakening or revival. In fact, the very word revival has that connotation. A time of awakening. Speaking of the revival, I believe that has taken place. In the history of the Church, we had something before us last evening in regard to this how, when God returned to Jerusalem with mercies. We saw that in the Book of Revelation, chapter two and three, that in the course of the Church's history, when we come to the Thyatira period of Thyatira, when the Church had fallen into idolatry.

Perhaps Speaking of the the Middle Ages. Why? The Spirit of God speaks of a remnant, and it's in connection with that remnant that a revival or a awakening. Was affected for the Lord's people and truth was recovered that had been lost and Saints were once again put in possession of the precious truth and ministry that was given originally through the apostles and especially through the ministry of Paul. This reminds me verse one of what we have in chapter 25 of Matthew. We'll turn to that. We'll just read it rather than refer to it perhaps. There might be some who are not familiar with what we're speaking about. Matthew 25. While we do not have the church as such here in Matthew 25, we do have what refers to the present age or the present time in the course, you might say, of the Christian testimony in connection with the Kingdom of heaven. I'm speaking about the 10 virgins that are brought before us. And in verse one we see that their original calling was that they were to go forth and meet the bridegroom. And they had a lamp of profession. And so they were to go forth to meet the bridegroom that speaks, you might say, of the. Their original calling and we know that the you might say the leading feature. Or the the feature that underlies the whole truth of Christianity is that God is calling out of this world a people for his name and for heavenly glory, calling them out to to meet the Bridegroom, as it were, the one who's going to come and receive them unto himself and take them to be with Himself. To share that heavenly glory with Him. But we read in verse five that while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. It speaks of the all of those connected and associated with the Christian testimony slumbered in slept, but in verse six at midnight there was a crime aid. Behold the bridegroom. When the word coming cometh is omitted in the better readings, for it's really the thought of the Bridegroom himself, it once again become the the hope and the object brought before those connected with the Christian testimony. And at midnight there was a crime aid. Well, this is a awakening out of sleep. Behold the bridegroom Now notice go ye out to meet him. That's what was said in verse one. They were went forth to meet the bridegroom. So it is an awakening or a revival and a return back to God's original thought. The thought of this awakening in revival is that, as we had last evening, God has returned to His original thought. And we see that this takes place in the church's history in. The message to Philadelphia in Revelation Three. There we have a return to the original thought of God in regard to the assembly of the Church and the affections of Christ and what the Church is to Christ. The return to the original fall. Behold the bridegroom go you out to meet them. So we might say that in Jeremiah or in Zechariah here where we have he's awakened out of sleep. We can see that this vision is connected with a day of revival and awakening. So it would apply to us today as those who. Are in a testimony or associated with a testimony that is connected with a revival or awakening? For I do believe that when the spirit of God. Work through men of God in the early part of last century to restore again to the Church of God in a practical way. The truth you might see the full aid of Christianity as given. Originally through the apostles and especially Paul's ministry. Why? That would correspond to the to the epic or period in the church's history of Philadelphia. And there is a testimony identified with that. Well, I believe here we have the thought that there has been an awakening and a revival. And so there is a testimony in connection with it. But now notice verse 10 in Zechariah 4. Not only is it a day of a revival.

And awakening. But it says, Who hath despised the day of small things? For it was a day of small things. This is another thing that characterizes what we have in Chapter 4, this vision and the testimony in such a day that it is a day of it's a testimony and a day of revival or awakening, and it is the testimony of the Lord in the day of small things. Now this is this is striking because you know, in the history of the testimony of God set up in this world, it began in great power. And now, toward the end of that period of history, it's characterized by a day of small things. In the habit of man's thinking, I don't say that it's necessarily always true. But in man's way of thinking, things begin little, and then they get better and bigger and bigger and improve. I mean, that's if you examine the philosophy of man, you'll find that's always his thought. He never thinks of things deteriorating. He always thinks in terms of things improving and things do not get smaller in his in his calculations, but things always get bigger, as I say, better. Well, that's his thought. It isn't always so because sometimes what man considers to be progress is really retrogression. But nonetheless, in his thought, it's progress, it's always getting better, but we find that. It's been true with all testimony or any testimony. Every testimony committed to man's responsibility has. Has ended up, as it were, in connection with a remnant and small things. But, he says, Who hath despised the day of small things? Now that question would be very pertinent today for it to be to be identified with something that is small is not, is not attractive to one who is accustomed to thinking according to the mind of man. For instance, just to be very frank and practical. Why in my hometown, and this happened to be when I was still in the building business on on Monday morning after a so-called Easter Sunday as it's referred to when I appeared on the job, Why one of the salesman for one of the suppliers that supplied me came on the job and he knew, of course, that I was a Christian and I had spoken. Before about the Lord, or at least in his mind, I guess he would say I was very religious and so he wanted to start the conversation along religious lines. So he said to me, did you have a great service in your church yesterday? That was his first, first word he said. And then he wanted to know, did we have a large turn out? What you see in his mind, that was, that was what he would expect on Easter Sunday, you know, when everyone turns out and there is an elaborate service, you see a day of small things. Well, when I spoke to him of the few gathered to the Lord's name, and that we had the remembrance of the Lord as we do every Lord's Day, and that it was another first day of the week to us, well. It sort of took the wind out of the conversation and he wanted to change it to other things, of course. For it was number attraction. A small thing of that nature was number attraction. But if I could have spoken about a large service and explained described to him the finery of the service and the large turn out, we would have probably had quite a conversation along those lines. But is today of small things and the tendency is to despise such a thing. We'll now turn back to the. Revelation chapter 3. For we will probably be turning to this more than once, for we find that there is a correspondence between. The time of the Remnant in Zechariah's day and what we have in Revelation. 3. I'm referring again to the Church at Philadelphia. I want to read it rather than just quote it. In Revelation 3. Verse eight. I know thy works. Behold, I have set before the unopened door, and no man can shut it. For thou hast a little strength, or the word should be translated power. Thou hast a little power. That's what characterized them. But you know there is no assembly of all of the seven brought before us.

Beth Soul rejoices the heart of the Lord Jesus and is so. Set forth in such a commendable way as this assembly at Philadelphia. And yet what characterized them was that they had a little strength. There was nothing grand there. There was nothing imposing. There was nothing that they could ride out in a in papers and pamphlets and circulate around in order to to amaze people with their great success, or anything of the sort. No, but they had. They were characterized by a little. Power, a little power. It was a, it's characterized by a day of small things. But also I want to point out this, while it says little power, which would indicate a day of small things, the word strength or power should be noted. That is, they had to, we might be there even if they didn't have quantity. And you know, I believe that's something to think about. That those gathered to the Lord's name. We want, we don't want to be occupied with quantity, that is numbers. For after all, what is mere numbers? There's nothing wrong with being little. There's nothing wrong with being small, but God looks for quality. That is, it may be only a few, but the few there should be of of equality that would meet his approval. And I believe the thought that it's we have here a little strength. He doesn't just say there's a few. He doesn't say. Now there's just a little company there. Because you could have a little company. Oh, but what? What's the state? What's the spiritual state of that little company? That isn't the point. The point is, it's true they were small and little, but they had power. And the power they had, of course, was not human power. It was the power of the Holy Spirit. Turned back to the book, The Acts of the Apostles. I think it's chapter 4. And we'll contrast and yet a little comparison to chapter 4 of Acts and verse 33. Philadelphia had power. It was little power, but it was power. And I believe we'll see here. The true thought of a remnant. I mentioned the 1St. Evening we were together on this subject. The thought of a remnant is that it's a part of the original. And it bears the features of the original, it's just a smaller portion of it. And we see this, I believe, with Philadelphia that what they had. Was the same thing that was there in the early church. It was just a smaller portion, so to speak, in a smaller way, verse 33 says. And with great power. Now, the reason I translated the word in in Revelation 3A, little power and and I'm not just changing it arbitrarily. You can check it out in the new translation or any interlinear Greek and you'll find that the word translated power here is the same word in the Greek is the word translated strength. In Revelation 3, it's the same word. And with great power. So in other words, what Philadelphia had was the same thing. They had the same power, but it wasn't great power. Now it was little power because it was a day of small things. But the quality was the same because they were going on in the power of the Spirit of God. Not by might, not by power, but by my spirit. You see, the power that was there was the Spirit of God the same. Power that gave the apostles witness to the resurrection here. And with great power. And what was the source of this great power? The Spirit of God. The source of this great power that the apostles that enabled the apostles to give witness of the resurrection was the Holy Spirit. And so the quality was there. But it's a day of small things, and I have felt that this should be an exercise on the part of those gathered to the Lord's name. Not so much. Not that anyone would just glory in smallness or numbers. And not that one would say, Oh well, we don't want to have two or three hundred. We don't want to have two or three thousand or anything of the sort. That isn't the point. But the point is that we would not be occupied with numbers or quantity, but the quality. That is, that there might be with those who are there gathered to the Lord's name, that there might be spirituality, that there might be the power of the Spirit of God. And you know, it's sometimes I get the feeling when we talk about spirituality and the power of the Spirit that someone gets the impression that spirituality.

Sort of a nebulous high sounding thing that is elusive and and what does it mean that someone is holier than thou and super pious and all of those expressions will hear them sometimes. But you know what about a word like in Galatians, if any man be overtaken in the fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one. I said that your brother one time I said, suppose someone were to say that in your meeting. Ye that are spiritual, would there be any who would? The exercise ye that are spiritual or the apostle certainly expected that there would be those that are spiritual. It is not a matter of pride. We would desire to be spiritual. I believe is one who is endeavoring to to be led and guided by the Spirit of God. He is not he is not seeking to walk. Spiritual doesn't mean perfect. You know, sometimes we get the impression you speak about spirituality and they say, oh, he thinks he's perfect. If you're spiritual, admit, never make a mistake. Never at any time say something out of line. All that isn't it, but what it means is this, that if one does act in the flesh, I believe where there is spirituality, it is it is felt and it is detected and it is judged. That's the thought of the spiritual. It is that there is a spirit of of self judgment, not perfection. We're not going to find that. If the apostle had meant that there would be no one to go restore a brother overtaking in the fall for their none perfect and without.

But either the spiritual I believe is those who are seeking to be governed by the Spirit of God and they're, they're going on in a spirit of a spirit of self judgment. So that when, when the fleshly thoughts and ways crop up, there is an exercise to judge them and to set them aside. Well, I, I think we should be exercised about whether or not there is spirituality. And whether things are done in a spiritual way. Taken up in that regard, that would be a little power, I believe, because it's not going to be manifested, this power in a great way. And another thing sometimes in the thought of the power of the Spirit in the minds of some professing Christians is when you speak about the power of the Spirit, you know, what they think about. They think of perhaps great multitudes of souls being brought in, you know. Oh no. You see, it's a day of small things, and so the power of the Spirit of God may not be manifest in that, but you know. It takes power to go against the current of this world and the. And the little power that might be manifest among the Saints gathered to the Lord's name might be exhibited in a way of giving them the. Strength and the courage to just be able to go against the current. You say, well, why do you want to go against the current? Well, all you have to do is examine the currents that are all about us and you. And you know why you want to go against them? Because the currents are all contrary to the mind of God. One reads the word of God and I'm impressed more and more as I read the Bible. That, to put it plainly, how in a sense impractical the Bible is. If you want to get along in this world, you, you read the scriptures, you read them habitually and then you go out and you work and in your contacts and you find people don't think like you find in the Bible. They don't, they don't act that way. They don't, they don't want to act that way. They don't want to go in the way that you find here. Well, you see, that's that's the current. And so the believer has to go against the current and it does take power. But if the power is the Spirit of God, now it won't be great power, but it can be a little power. And that's the quality I'm speaking about. The quality that the Lord looks for is that power of the Spirit of God to to do things according to the mind of the Spirit. And in the power of the Spirit will turn back then to Zechariah. What I want to take a look here at this. Vision that he had. Of the Candlestick or the lampstand. This golden lampstand in verse 2. He looks and he sees a lampstand of gold. And there was a bowl upon the top of it. This bowl, of course, was the objects of the bowl was.

To be a vessel that would contain the oil. That was supplied by the olive trees. And. We're circulated to the lamps. By means of the pipes. But we read here that there was a lampstand all of gold with a bowl up on the top of it, and then there were seven lamps. That was to the lamps, of course, is that which gives the light. And seven pipes to the seven lamps. Which upon the top thereof, and then two olive trees by it. And we see in verse 12 That these two olive trees. Supplied the oil. Through the golden pipes supplying the oil to the lamps. Well, no doubt it went to the. To the bow, first as a as a receptacle or a vessel that care that that held the oil, and then from there to the to the lamps that it might shine out. Well, what does this bring before us? Turn back again to Revelation, this time chapter one. In Revelation One we have what I believe would interpret this lampstand of gold to us. Verse 12, John says. I turn to see the voice that speak with me. And being turned I saw 7 golden candlesticks. Our lamp stands. Now in verse 20 of this chapter, the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars of the angels of the seven churches and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches. So we see that the thought of a lampstand is connected with the the assembly. Now, of course, here in Revelation One, there's seven in our in our chapter in. There was only one lampstand which I believe speaks of the testimony of the Lord in connection with. His house set up here in this world to be the pillar and support of the truth. Now the reason I believe there's seven in Revelation One rather than one lampstand, is the fact that the the way in which the truth of the assembly is carried out in a practical way as to our responsibility in regard to it is in a local way. In other words, there is no such thing as the. The universal church on earth. There is one church. The House of God in First Timothy, I believe, is the Church universal, the Church of the living God. The House of God, the Church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. That's the church looked at as the universal church. That one church on earth set up by God is his house here on earth in public testimony to be the pillar and support of the truth. But the way this, the way this truth is carried out responsibly is in a local way, in local assemblies. The church universal does not act. There's no such thing as an ecumenical council. That is the church universal functioning. And acting as a universal church. Now it does. It is true that the church on earth acts, but it acts through local assemblies. That is, when a local assembly acts, it acts for the whole church on earth. But the church universal doesn't come together. We find that principle, I believe in the ordering of the camp of Israel. Typically when in the second chapter of the Book of Numbers, when we see that each man was. By his own standard and according to his own tribe. As each tribe had a designated place and each man was to pitch. By his own standard. But all of these tribes were given a place round about the Tabernacle. That is, they were all set up in relation to the central thought of the Tabernacle. But each man was to be in his own standard. And so it is with those who are believers on the Lord Jesus. A part of the one universal church. Each one is to have a local connection. You see, the church functions in a local way. It functions as a local assembly. And that's. When we have the ardor and in which the church is to function set forth in Scripture, it's written to a local assembly. That is, Paul writes to the Church of God, which is in Corinth. We do not have in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the local, we do not have the ardor and function of the church and the Epistle to the Ephesians, for there it's more the church in its universal character. They have, we have the one church on earth in its universal character, but the truth of what the church is, the one church on earth is to be carried out in a in a local way in the local gatherings. And that's what we have in the First Epistle of the Corinthians to the church.

God, which is at Corinth. The fact that there are 7 churches here, the seven lampstands Speaking of seven churches does not mean. That all of these assemblies were independent of one another, it means that responsibility. In the church belongs to each one of us in a local way. Each one has his own local connection and his own local responsibility. And yet that is not. A disassociated from the fact that all local gatherings are really are a part of that one church which is on earth. But I referred to this, I didn't want to get off on a digression of that. I referred to chapter one chiefly to connect the fall of a golden lampstand with the thought of the assembly. And back in Zechariah. It's one, and it brings before us the truth of the Church. And I believe this means that God's fault for the remnant in a day of revival and awakening, and in a day of small things, His thought is. The testimony, the church is his testimony set up here in this world. And we're going to go on with it, despite the fact that it is a day of ruin and failure. We know that there are those. That they say because of the scattering and because of the divisions and because of all of the circumstances that exist, well there they they give up the fault of the church or the assembly as set forth in Scripture. But we want to remember this, that the church is God's vessel of testimony set here in this world as his vessel of testimony through the whole. Of this this period in which we live, and until the church is taken out. Turn to 1St Corinthians 12. I think we have there in One Corinthians 12. And verse 12, what corresponds to what I would speak Speaking of as. The church being the vessel of testimony for God, no one individual as an individual fulfills the thought of God as the vessel of testimony. Not that an individual is is not a witness, but God's thought is and always has been from the very beginning of this age, a collective witness and testimony. Verse 12 Far as the body is one. And has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body. So also is the church. No, it doesn't say that. Now we know it's talking about the church, but it says so also is the Christ. Now it's remarkable. Why does it say so also is the Christ? Why doesn't it say so? Also is the church? Because the Christ, as it should be, the word Thee is found in the original, so also is the Christ. It brings before us the thought. The Christ, the anointed is the, you might say, the vessel of God's testimony. The Lord Jesus was that when he was here. He was, He was in Himself, you might say. The the vessel of God's testimony, and now he's taken out of this world. And there has been farmed here on

earth the body of Christ, the mystical body, if you want to use that word, spiritual body, of course not His literal body. And it now, as it were, replaces Christ. Just as he was the the witness of God Now then as we read in Revelation One, he was that faithful witness. Now then, so also is the Christ that's referring to the Church, the anointed vessel of God. To be for God's testimony here in this world. And notice it isn't an individual. It's the one body. Has many members and they're all one body, so that the thought here is not that we are individually to be witnesses for Christ, but he has set up here the Christ his anointed, which is the church, the assembly for by 1 Spirit, where we all baptized into one body. Whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. And very often we quote this verse and stop there.

But notice it says and have been all made to drink into one spirit. Well, I I believe that's a very practical word. We've been all made to drink into one spirit by the one spirit. We were, we were made members of the one body. But not only that, we've been all made to drink into one spirit. Well, you know. No doubt that is the Holy Spirit. This is what forms the basis for the exhortation of Paul when he says endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And why could he exhort us to keep the unity of the Spirit? Because we've all been made to drink into one spirit. God has not given me a different spirit from you. I have a different personality. As an individual, I have certain traits that you don't have, but we all have received the same spirit. I haven't received a different spirit from you. We've all been made to drink into one spirit. Sometimes the thought of of giving up collective testimony is, well, you know, you can never make people agree. I hear this so often. You can never make people agree. Everyone has different thoughts, and that's quite true. But God has given me a different spirit. Than you, we've all been made to drink into one spirit. This is the this is the practical side of the truth of the one body. He's not only formed us into one body, but he's given us all the same spirit. The same spirit, identical, no difference. And so we can keep the unity of the spirit because we all have the same spirit, but we cannot keep the unity of the Spirit. If we're not walking according to the Spirit, then that's when our various personalities, that's when our various traits come in and rub against one another and grate against one another. And so that's why it's necessary that there should be. Humility and loneliness, long-suffering and forbearing with one another because we don't always walk according to the Spirit. But still there should be the exercise endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, for we have all that is, there is the capability of it. I remember JB Stoney as a remark he made one time and I thought it was very good, he says. We find in Scripture that. The Christians capabilities are equal to his responsibilities and that's true. We will find that whatever our responsibilities are, there is the capability for it all. Not in the flesh it's true, but in the Spirit. And that's the teaching of Zechariah 4 that that everything is in the power of the Spirit of God. And that's what we find here. There will never be any practical unity among the Saints of God if there is not a being governed by the Spirit of God. If it's if it's every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, If it each one bringing his thoughts and you know this is the way. Fraternities in this world that this is the way they operate their efforts to come to the unity is a sort of a a unanimity of thought is that each one, maybe they have a little meeting together and each one gives his thoughts, they pool their thoughts and there's a pro and con. There's a give and take. And then the result of all this is they arrive at some sort of a formula, some sort of a course of action that's agreeable to all. Well, this is not the way the Church of God operates. This is the way it is where each one subject to that one spirit in which we've all been made to drink. It isn't a pooling of ideas. It isn't a matter of pro and con and finding some formula that we can all agree on and then go along on that lines. No, it's by the Spirit of God. We've been all made to drink into one spirit. This is that wonderful vessel of testimony. And in Zechariah 4, it's in connection with the day of revival awakening, a day of small things. One might have said, well, this is possible. This would have been possible back in the days of the apostles. No, it's possible today because the Spirit of God. Remains with us. The Spirit of God is here. And so in Philadelphia they had a little power and it was associated with the Spirit. Turn back again now to Zechariah, our chapter in Zechariah chapter 4 and you'll notice I've already anticipated in a way. About the power of the Spirit being behind the testimony. But notice in verse two again this lampstand. As we see, represents the Church as the vessel of testimony. It was all of gold.

A golden scripture is typical of that which is divine, and we would find in Revelation chapter one two that the Lord Jesus was in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. They were golden. Reminding us that the Assembly or the Church is a divine institution, it's not a human one. It is not a human organization, but it's a divine institution still. And the assembly and going on with the thought of the assembly, we're going on with that which is divine. And the lamps would no doubt bring before us the, the, the shining out of the testimony. And the pipes is that which supplies the oil, and the oil being the Spirit of God. And so we can we can see that here we have the the vessel of testimony and the way this testimony is carried out and, and shining out and giving light as God intend in this Dark World, the light of himself. It's a divine thing and it's give out in lights, these lights, and it's supplied through the pipes. Well, this reminds me. You turn back again to this time to Ephesians. Of a portion in Ephesians chapter four, we might say that in the second chapter. In verse 11, through the end of the chapter, through the rest of the chapter, we have the formation. Of this vessel of testimony, the Church. Of Jew and Gentile forming the one Newman. House of God. And so forth. In chapter four we have the the way it functioned, or you might say the shining out of the light. And in connection with that we read in verse 7, Unto everyone of us. It's given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ unto everyone of us. Unto every one of us, not just some of us here. There has been a gift according to the giving of Christ, something given. This isn't salvation. This means that everyone sat in the body as a member of the body has a function. This is taken up in verse 16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplier. According to the effect we're working the measure of every part make it increase to the body under the edifying of itself in love. So we see that every every one of us has been set in the body as a joint of supply. By that which every joint supplies a joint of supply. You remember now in Zechariah 4 there were the pipes that supplied the oil that made the light burn. And so the testimony of the Lord is maintained by the Saints, supplying in the power of the Spirit that light and testimony here in this world. The whole body, every joint, supplies something. And I would say this, that we're all supplying something. And I trust we're supplying that which really is furthers the testimony in causing the the light to shine, causing the light to shine more brightly, rather than supplying or anything that might hinder it. But in verse 11, we have some special gifts in chapter 4, and he gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. Well, this of course would also be involved in the in the supply and in making the light shine. And these gifts are for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. That is, it's they're given in order, like the evangelist. The evangelist, you might say, are the ones who who bring in those joints of supply. And the preaching of the gospel. So we see here that the fault of God in saving souls. Is not merely or only that they might be ransomed from hell and from judgment, but that they might be brought into this testimony, that there might be a joint of supply too, and to be brought into this testimony. That's the thought of the evangelist. And when they're bought, brought in the pastor, the teachers care for them, feed them and look after them and maintain them in such a state that they're able to to function as joints of supply and to supply what is. Beneficial to the testimony that causes the light to shine.

Well. We see that the assembly is the vessel of testimony shining for God here in this world, and the Saints farming that assembly are looked at as joints of supply. And God has given special gifts, not only to farm them to bring them in, but to maintain them and to keep them, as it were, in a in a proper condition, so that the flow of oil might continue. Even in a day of ruin and failure, these things continue. You know these

special gifts in Ephesians 4 are not like the furnishings of the Spirit in in the. 12Th chapter of 1 Corinthians In one Corinthians 12 some of those furnishings of the Spirit. Are not fitting for a day of ruin and failure, and so they do not continue. But in Ephesians 4, the evangelists, pastor and teacher continues even in a day of ruin and failure, a day of small things, a day of revival and awakening, to keep the pipes of supply or the joints of supply of the pipes in good order. Well, the the major thought, as I said in the beginning here in this chapter. Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. And then it says, Who art thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel, thou shall become a plain. This speaks about the power to overcome obstacles and. This mountain, of course, would be would be brought before us as an obstacle. And there were obstacles in the way of rebuilding the temple. But he says before Zerubbabel, thou shall become a plain. Well. Perhaps Zerubbabel would be indicated in verse fourteen of our chapter. Zechariah. These are the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth. And I believe this refers to Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. And the word anointed ones here literally is sons of oil. So it would bring before us that Zerubbabel here is set before us as one who is undertaking the work of God. In a day of awakening, a day of small things, he's undertaking the work of God. The mountains have to be. As it were removed the obstacles in order to continue this building of the temple, the House of God. And the rubble would be one who is as a sum of oil, doing this work in the power of the Spirit of God and according to the Spirit of God. I want to read in Second Corinthians chapter 10 a very important principle for us. In connection with the service of the Lord. Because I think the thought of a mountain being reduced to a plane. Which speak of service? Conflict and we want to see in 2nd Corinthians 12. It's not by might nor by power, by any human method or means, but by the Spirit of God. Now the apostle Paul says in verse 2, But I beseech you that I may not be bold. 2nd Corinthians 10 I'm reading may not be bold when I'm present with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against some which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walked in the flesh, that is in the body. We're still in the body, he says. We do not war. And what's that Word war after the flesh. This has to do with service. This is not so much the thought of worship, and sometimes we are inclined to think. That when it comes to the worship of God, like at the breaking of bread, well, yes, everything there should be by the Spirit. We don't want to bring in human instruments of music and so forth there. Well, that's all by the Spirit of God. But when it comes to service, well, we want to take up a different principle. But the apostle says, no, we don't war after the flesh either. We don't, we don't worship after according to the flesh, but we don't war according to the flesh for the weapons. Literally the arms of our warfare, the means. See, the arms of warfare are the means that one. Uses are the instruments of war. The means he uses to wage war, that's the arms of warfare. So this would have reference to the means. That we're to use in, you might say the conflict of the truth, the Gospel evening going out. The means that we're employee says are not carnal. That is, they're not fleshly. They're not according to the flesh, but they're mighty according to God. It should be. That is, they may not be mighty according to man. That is it. Man would look at it, he'd say, oh, that's a very poor means. You'll never get any work done for God that way.

Because according to man, in order to get things accomplished, you have to have. You've got to organize and you've got to really do things according to a salesmanship fashion. But he says they're mighty according to God, according to God's reckonings, as it were. It's it's powerful because it's not according to flesh to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations are the thoughts of man and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God and bringeth into captivity. Every thought to the obedience. Christ, well, the apostle is saying here that he does not employ. Fleshly means. In his Christian warfare, no, he's going to, he's not going to employ fleshly means, but he employs that which is mighty according to God. It's according to the Spirit. And this is a real test. It's a real test. The real question, the real test in Christian service is not, is this effective? That's not the real test. The real test is, is it according to the Spirit of God? Is it compatible with the Spirit of God? Is this what the Spirit of God? Lead us to do.

Conference: 1974, Give me My Price

Address—P.L. Johnson

I want to turn to the Prophet Zechariah Chapter 11. Zechariah Chapter 11. I trust this doesn't fill anyone with apprehension reading from the Prophet Zechariah as if we were going to get involved in some prophetic subject, but I want to refer to a couple of verses there that might be used of the Lord I trust to. Produce an exercise. In the heart of each and everyone, and again. As we mentioned in our prayer to the Lord, our burden being especially for those young in the faith. Chapter 11. It might even be attached with some if you can find the book. Zechariah 11 and verse 12 And I said unto them. If you think good, give me my price. And if not for Bear? So they weighed for my price 30 pieces of. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it into the Potter, a goodly price. That I was prized at of them. And I took the 30 pieces of silver and cast them to the Potter in the house. Of the Lord. Now turn back to. Genesis chapter 37. I'm going to read these passages before we speak on them. In Genesis 37, a couple of verses there verse 26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What prophet is it, if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood come? Let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him. For He is our brother, and our flesh and his brethren were content. Hebrews chapter 12, Hebrews 12 and verse 15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God. Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled, lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Ethan, who for one Marshall of meat sold his birthright for you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. Where he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. And back in the Old Testament again in First Kings. Chapter 21. First Kings, chapter 21. Verse one. And it came to pass after these things, that neighbor. The Jezreelite had a vineyard which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace. They had King of Samaria, and they have spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near into my house, and I will give before it a better vineyard than it. Are If it seemed good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it and money. Lab off said until he had the Lord forbidden me that I should give the inheritance of my father's. Unto thee. Now in Luke's Gospel, chapter 4. The Gospel of Luke. Chapter 4. And verse one. And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Being 40 days tempted to the devil, and in those days he did eat nothing and when they were ended he afterward. Hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone, that he be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me. Whomsoever I will, I give it, if thou therefore will worship me.

All shall be thine, Jesus answered and said unto him, Yet be behind me, Satan. For it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hints. Lord is written, he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee. And in their hands they shall bear thee

up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against the stone. And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Well, these passages that we have read. I trust that the Lord might use them to bring before us what? Is the exercise upon my heart, especially in regard to the younger ones in our midst meeting, being designated, especially as addressed to young Christians? I think of. Paul, Second epistle to Timothy. Which is, to me, so appropriate for the day in which we live. And more so in connection with the young believers who have an exercise. In regard to the testimony of the Lord, we know, of course, that in the company that is gathered here this afternoon. I rather imagine that among the young people so-called. There's quite a mixture. There might be some in our midst. Though they have heard the gospel many times and they are aware of the facts of the gospel. And they know the way of salvation, yet they are still on the road to destruction. We believe perhaps this is true when a gathering of this size and this number of young persons. It is very likely that there are those who are still in their sins. And indeed, one would just caution again. That word of caution that is needed to such a soul that. To believe or did not believe and go on as you are means one will die in their sins. And be judged Father sins. I didn't really have it upon my heart as we have scheduled a gospel meeting this evening to go into the thought of the gospel. So I'd like to refer to perhaps another group of young people that are our midst. That is, those who have very little, if any exercise as to their walk and wave, And I'm not speaking harshly. Sad to say, we find that they are those who seem to be content to be an outward association with the Lord's people, but without a real exercise as to their own. Place at the Lord's Table. And not only being there at the Lord's table, but being there in a way suitable to the Lord and to the testimony, and being there in such a way that they contribute to the testimony. And not any way of being a hindrance. And I trust that if there are any in our midst in that state this afternoon, that you might be exercised through the word. That you too might be a part of the testimony. And seeking to maintain and continue the testimony until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then no doubt there are those young believers in our midst who have a genuine exercise. To go on in the truth according to the word of God, and for the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ. And to contribute to the testimony. And as I say, I think of Paul's writing to Timothy. As a young man of that we might say that type in Sark with a real exercise, and he says to Timothy that good thing that was committed under the key by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us, that good thing that was committed under the And so I have especially before me those in our midst this afternoon.

Who have been blessed. With truth, not only the gospel, but the truth of the assembly. The truth of separation, that which honors the Lord Jesus Christ. The truth of that which belongs to the people of God as they pass through this scene. As pilgrims and strangers. And as Paul would say to Timothy, that good thing committed under the teeth. We want to maintain it. And then he also says, Continue thou in the things that thou hast learned, and has been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned them. So we were thinking of the continuance of the testimony. Now I believe that as the days approach, and it might be only hours, we know. Before the Lord Jesus comes to take his own out of this scene. The pressure of the enemy will become more and more. Greater and greater in regard to the maintenance and continuance. Of the testimony of the Lord. You know, we read in Revelation. I just I know that strictly speaking and interpreted Lee, it refers to something else, but he speaks about Satan there when he's cast out of heaven and says knowing that he has for the short time. And perhaps Satan might feel that he has only a sharp time to completely obliterate the testimony through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that was revived graciously by God in the last century. Testimony that was found in the Word recorded in the word, when the apostle gave the whole council of God, and when he gave the light of God that was to govern the assembly. As during its pilgrimage in this scene, that testimony that was allowed to let and to go Into Darkness, and which God has graciously revived and restored. Perhaps Satan realizing he has only a short while there will be. Great pressure to give up this truth are to alter it in some way. Various efforts. And that was why I was exercised to read what we read in Zechariah 11, there the Prophet. In a symbolic way, no doubt he it's prophetically Speaking of concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the fact that he was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, that he was valued only with 30 pieces of silver by Judas representing that nation that saw no value in him. And the prophet, you remember, says give me my price. In other words, he's saying, as it were, Will you set a price upon me? Will you sell me out for a price? He said. If not for bear. But that was the challenge. Will you sell me out with a price? And I would say beloved young people. That this should be our exercise. Would we sell out? To the world or to the enemy? For a prize? Is there something that can be offered? That would induce us to no longer seek to maintain or to continue the testimony. Well, that's the real challenge. Give me my price and what price would you set upon the Lord Jesus and the precious truth that has been made available to us? And it may be that many of us have entered into very little of it. But I would say this, that however small the portion that you as an individual believer have entered into the truth. You want to buy the truth and sell it now. We don't want to relinquish even that little bit. That you have entered into not even a little bit those who have entered into more. Perhaps have more that they might be able to to sell out, but whether it's little or more. We want to be exercised that we would not place a price opponent. We would recognize the pricelessness of knowing the Lord Jesus, not only a Savior, but knowing him in the various ways he's revealed in Scripture and the things that he reveals to us, as we shall see, as we touch on a few examples in regard to what we might speak of as selling out to the enemy. Now I read in Luke.

Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, because we have Him. Here as the perfect model for us, the perfect model for you and me. In the wilderness. But that's where the Lord Jesus is found in Luke 4. He's in the wilderness. And the wilderness is the place of Satan's power, and that's where you and I are, beloved young people. We are in the wilderness. That's what this world has become to you and me since we have believed on the Lord Jesus. And this wilderness is the scene of Satan's power, and it's a scene of testing. And we will never get out of the place of testing until we're taken out of this world entirely. Sometimes young believers feel that the testings that they're called upon to go through and their teens are greater than any other time in the Christian life. And when they get a little older, the testings will not be so severe. And then when they get into the next stage, they feel well as a young mother or father, the testings. Are are greater than they were than the younger, but when they get older they'll get less. The beloved As long as we're in the wilderness, it's the scene of testing. The scene of testing because. It's the place of Satan's power, and there will always be the challenge. Give me my price. And is it where we can sell out at any stage along the way? But I would say to the dear young people. Do not sell out that which God has graciously brought to you and your youth. In your childhood. From a child having known the Holy Scriptures. The things that you have learned that you know are the truth of God, not only I say in regard to salvation, but in regard to the Christians walk and testimony. The place outside the camp, gathering together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and all of these precious things. They'll always be testing for us in regard to them. Well, now, the Lord Jesus was tested here in three ways in Luke's gospel. And the effort of the enemy was to get him, if he could, to give up. That which he had undertaken as man here in this scene. And you remember the 1St test was this, If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread. The first task to give up the place that he had taken. Was a temptation to satisfy his own personal needs, self gratification. And you know, beloved young people, we can sell out the truth. If that which satisfies our own personal needs self gratification. Is the primary object in life. Satan will be sure to put things in our pathways that will take us out from among the the large people or get us occupied in such a way that we'll not have time to read and to pray and all of that. If self gratification, the meeting of our own personal well needs or ambitions is number one, the Lord Jesus says man shall not live by it by bread alone, but by every. Word of God. Every word of God He doesn't say just by the truth, but every word of God. We know, of course, that the Word of God is the Scripture. But it's called the Word of God because it is that which forms

the practical link. Between our souls and God now every believer has a living link with God as a child of God. We all have the life of Christ, but as a believer in a practical way. That link cannot be realized and enjoyed. Unless there is the feeding on the Word of God, it's only the Word of God that brings us into contact with God. I might read the writings of this world whether it be current event. Of whether it be history, whether it be any other pursuit that man has. And it does not bring my soul. Into contact with the living God. But when I read this book, it brings me into contact with God. It's God's voice speaking to me. And there is a living link, a practical link between my soul and God, he says. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. He would not.

Neglect, you might say, or he would not avoid that which formed a practical link with gone. Now you remember the 2nd temptation. In offering him, the kingdoms of this world was in order that the Lord Jesus might bow down and worship him. That his allegiance might be to Satan rather than God. Or we know the perfection of the Lord Jesus as we have prophetically in the 16th Psalm. I have set the Lord always before me. He would have no other gods before him. He would have no other object. Even if having another object might have brought honor and might have brought gain, as far as humanly speaking was concerned. You know, in Isaiah we read of the Jews and that day they'll have to say, oh, Lord, our Lord, other Lords have had dominion over us. Yes, they sold out to other Lords than the Lord. And they got under the dominion of other Lords. Well, the Lord Jesus would not be brought under the dominion of anyone save His God, upon whom he was cast from his mother's belly. No, he valued. He valued having God is the object before His soul. As a man passing through this scene, He valued God so much that He would not take anything that was offered that would bring Him under the power of another. The Apostle Paul says all things are lawful unto me. But I'll not be brought under the power of any. There is such a thing, you know, of being brought under the power of things that would rob us. Of having God is our object, and God is our joy, and God is our delight. You know, beloved young people, in being saved, it's not only that we're on our way to the glory, with our sins forgiven. And judgment, death and judgment behind us. But in Peter we're told that we've been brought to God, we've been brought to God. And in Roman five, we joy in God. Well, you can. You can sell that out that joy in God, and you can sell out the practical. Blessing that comes in being brought to God by being brought under the power. Of the things of this world are things that are not according to the mind of God. Our Lord is a perfect example. Then finally, the third temptation, when he takes him upon the pinnacle of the temple. And tell them to cast himself down. He quotes from a song, and I'll read it. He shall give his angels charge over these to keep thee. But we know that if we were to turn to Psalm 91 and read what was written in the word of God. Satan omitted 3 little words that are found there. And that is in all thy ways forward. Satan did not use those words. He was trying to get the Lord Jesus out of the place of dependence, out of the pathway that he had taken up. As a dependent man here in this world, there was a pathway marked out for the Lord Jesus. Given to him of God, and Satan wanted to get him out of that pathway. So there are three temptations here in regard to personal gratification. In regard to one having another object than God and then also to get one out of the path. Of dependence and obedience and the Lord is ever is our perfect model and example. He says take my yoke upon you and learn from me literally. He's the model from whom we ought to learn. But I'd like to turn to those passages that we read and briefly. Point out three examples that we read in regard to these three things which the Lord Himself stood perfectly. And we see two ways in which we might fail, and another as an example of faithfulness for us. Turn first of all to Genesis 37, where we read concerning Judah. And some very solemn words in regard to Joseph, verse 27.

Imagine Joseph, or rather Judah saying this. Come. And let us sell him. You know, just the reading of those words. Come, let us sell him. Obviously, Judah did not value Joseph. He had set a very low value upon Joseph. Come, let us sell him. He was willing to sell Joseph Allen. And no doubt Joseph here is a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the time of our Lord Jesus Christ in a special way. We know Joseph was loved of his father. And his father made him a coat of many colors. And Joseph was sent to seek his brethren. And later on. In connection with the Pharaoh king of Egypt. He became the one who was called a revealer of secrets, and I would like to apply this to the person of the Lord Jesus in this way. Now I know this, that every young person who is saved a believer on the Lord Jesus. As far as the salvation of your soul is concerned, is as secure as the most devout and godly brother or sister in this room or who has ever lived. My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Then he goes on to say, Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. There is never a question raised in the word of God as to the salvation of the soul, that trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His sufferings on the cross of Calvary for salvation. And what I'm going to say and what I'm referring to has no reference at all. As to the salvation of your soul, we're speaking now as. In regard to the testimony and maintaining and continuing the testimony in the face of the enemies pressure in these closing days just before the Lord come. So it's entirely possible that while our salvation is secure, our testimony may not be. Now here we find one who had such little value of Joseph that he could say, come and let us sell him. One might say I would never sell out the Lord Jesus. I would never sell him out. I'm sure that's true. As a believer, you'd never sell him out. As the Savior. You're never give him up. No true believer will ever give up the Lord Jesus. I believe it can be said that in the heart of every child of God is found love for the Lord Jesus. Now there may be many things on top of that, so to speak, in the heart that that obscures the visibility of it so that it's not seen. But there is love in the bottom of the heart of every child of God, young as well as old, irrespective of his walk. But there may be many things piled on top, as I say. So then in a practical way. One can sell out his own enjoyment and appreciation of the Lord Jesus. That's why the Apostle Paul writes to the Colossians. Let no man beguile you. Let no man spoil you, for they couldn't be lost. He wasn't afraid they were going to lose their salvation and go to hell after all. No, he says. But you might be spoiled, you might be beguiled, so that you are not enjoying the one in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, so that you're not enjoying that mystery of God, even Christ, in whom he had all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And you know, I thought of this in regard of Joseph here, Joseph in type brings before us the Lord Jesus as that one who is loved of the Father. And you know, it's a wonderful thing as we read in the Word of God, as was mentioned in the reading this morning about one who was reading in the Gospels because he wanted to have fresh in his soul and in his heart this wonderful person. Loved of the Father, the code of many colors, the various glories that attached to that blessed person. As well as the fact that He was the one who came in grace to seek his brethren.

And not only that, but we know the Lord Jesus is the revealer of secrets. He says many things I have to say unto you, and you cannot bear them now, but when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. So all that has been revealed throughout the epistles is really the Lord Jesus by His Spirit, revealing the secrets of the heart of God and His own heart to us. I say, beloved young people. You know there is found in this precious book. Enough to occupy us in meditation and in study and admiration for a lifetime. And I'm sure that the oldest brother in the room, who has read the Scriptures more than any of us over the years, can say that he has in no way even come close to exhausting the wonderful stars of treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the things that are revealed, and the various glories of the Lord Jesus. Do we value this? Do we value this? Are there other things that we value instead? Well, we can sell out all of these wonderful things by coming. By like Judah here selling out Joseph, now I'd like to turn over to Hebrews 12. Where we have Esau brought before us. And Esau was one who sold out. Verse 16. The end of the verse. Who for one Marshall of meat sold. His birthright sold his birthright. Now we know that Esau was blessed of Isaac. But he lost the birthright. And I have no doubt that what Esau did desire blessing from Isaac. It wasn't just blessing that Esau. Despised. It wasn't blessing that he despised. What he despised specifically is called the birthright. Well, the birthright of course, of

course is connected with blessing. But you can have blessing without having the birthright, which he so did. He was blessed, but he never had the birthright. He despised it, so we don't want to make these two things equal the birthright and blessing. It's possible for one desire to desire a blessing from God and to be blessed of God, but not desire the birthright. What is the distinction? I believe, beloved young people, is this. The birthright, as I say, is not only blessing, but it connects one with the blesser personally. The birthright brings one into that line of Abraham and Isaac. So we read in the Old Testament of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Not Esau. It would have been, well, I say would have been. We know, of course, that God's purpose was that the elder should serve the younger. But as far as Esau responsibility was concerned. Having the birthright, it would have been Abraham Isaac Esau. No, no. He saw despised at birthright and so he's not brought into that line that would connect him. With the Father's Abraham and Isaac, although he desired a blessing. And I thought sometimes, you know, young people, there's one thing to to desire blessing. You want to go to heaven. You want to be the Lord? You don't want to go to hell, you don't want to be left in your sins and God is perhaps met you and saved you and blessed you. But do you really want to be connected with the blesser? Do you want to be connected with the person of the Lord Jesus himself? Here in this scene? You want to be identified with God as one of His children in a public way. Or would you rather just have the blessings without the blessing? That was Esau. He wanted the blessing, but he didn't want to be connected with the blessing. I think of another example. The elder brother in Luke 15. You remember there when the elder brother hears. The music and the dancing, the making merry and the father's house. And when he inquired and found out what it was he didn't want to go in, his father came out to him and spoke to him. And the elder son says, father, he says, I've served thee all of these years, and I've never gone astray, and thou never gave us me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. You notice he did not say that I might make merry with thee.

He had no desire to make Mary with the Father, he said with my friends, he wanted the fatted calf. He wanted what the Father had to offer. But he says that I might make merry with my friends. He didn't want it on the terms and in connection with the Father. And the Father's house, well, that's where the blessing is, and that's where the blesser is. And he saw, I believe, would be one who despised the birthright while seeking the blessing or wanting a blessing. He didn't want it in connection with the Blesser and in, you might say, under the terms. In which that birthright would be found. Like the elder brother, he wanted the fatted cows, but not in the father's house. Not in connection. With the way in which the Father has provided the fatty care. And I feel sometimes that this is one of the efforts that is going on in Christendom, even among fundamentalists and evangelicals. That while there might be the presenting of blessings in connection with the gospel gets divorced, as it were, from the connections in which it's supposed to be found. Because even the gospel is associated with the truth of the assembly. And the believers walk and separation from the world. You can't really divide these things. They all go together. God has provided blessing in the gospel for souls, and not only that, but they might be brought to the knowledge of the truth. The gathering together of the children of God scattered abroad, and it's all in connection with what the Father is set up here, the habitation of God through the Spirit and and many other truths. And we don't want to divorce the blessings from the blesser and beloved young people. We don't want to be one like Esau, to be content to have the blessing of salvation. That is as far as knowing that our sins are forgiven and on our way to the glory and yet not desire to be. In practical connection with the Blesser himself, God, here in this scene and with his people and in his pathway. And that brings us to the other one we read in second first Kings 21. First Kings 21. You remember the Lord Jesus is our model. Would not sell out for personal gratification. That's like Esau. Esau, as it were, was willing to sell out that which gave him. The living link. With its forefathers. Brought him in, would bring him into the line of the promises of God. He was willing to sell it out for personal gratification. For one Marshall of meat, the Lord Jesus would not do that. And just as we have seen, the Lord Jesus would not come under the power of Satan and lose. God is the object before his soul. Well, Judah would be the antithesis of that in selling out. Joseph as one upon whom he said very little, if any value. But you remember the third temptation of the Lord Jesus? Was that an effort of the enemy? To get him out of the pathway. The Scriptures had said in all thy ways he would be kept. That was the promise. The pathway that God had set out for him and Satan wanted to get him out of that pathway. Well now in First Kings 21 we have, I believe, a lovely example of one who follows. The model, the Lord Jesus, and he refuses to sell out to the enemy. Notice verse 2. Ahab comes to him comes to neighbor. Neighbor had a vineyard which was an inheritance. It was an inheritance. It wasn't something that that Naboth had originated. And you know, those of us here in the room this afternoon are not those who were used of God to restore the truth. Of the assembly, the truth of Christianity to recover it and restore it to the people of God. That happened many years ago. In that sense, we are not the originator. But we are those who have, in a sense, inherited it. It has come down to us and God is graciously preserved it and as young persons this afternoon.

I am speaking primarily to those who have been raised in connection with the truth. And you know the truth. You have been in contact with it, perhaps from infancy. What an inheritance. What an inheritance. Somewhat like Naboth here, who had this vineyard has an inheritance from his father. Now Ahab came to him. Ahab wanted that inheritance. And perhaps they have here which speak of the pressures of this world which has Satan behind it. Seeking to to seize upon that inheritance that you have as a young person, as a young believer in connection with the truth. But now notice the subtlety of this man Ahab. He didn't first of all say, now I buy it from you. Because no doubt he knew that Nimoff valued that inheritance, and the very thought of selling it out would have been important. So he's very careful in the verse two. Notice this Abe Ahab, speak unto Naboth, saying, Give me thine inheritance, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house, and I will give thee for it a better. Vineyard. I'll give you for it a better vineyard. He says now I have something that is better than what you have. Believe we find this sometimes round about us beloved young people of those who. Would insinuate, if they do not say in so many words, we have that which is better. Than what you have. Look what we're doing. I am sad to say sometimes it enters into the mind of some. Well, maybe it is better. Maybe it is better, it looks better, it sounds better, maybe it is better. Or what a temptation this is to sell out when something is is presented that appears to be. But Naboth knew that he had received this inheritance properly. From the Lord. No doubt he came down through his forefathers, but he received it from the Lord. Says to Timothy, Continue thou on the things that thou has learned and has been assured of knowing of whom thou hast learned it. You say, I learned it from my Sunday school teacher, from my father and mother. Well, we want to learn it from the Lord. The Lord might use various ones to have brought the truth to us. But if we have received it from the Lord, like Naboff, we know that there is not a better vineyard. If it's the truth of God, there is not a better vineyard. It may look so. It may be that there are other things roundabouts that have a better appearance. That appear to be more successful, but it isn't the inheritance according to the mind of God, is it according to the word of God. Is it that which God has restored graciously in His goodness to us? Well, this man neighbor would not give up his vineyard. He says I won't sell it, I will not exchange it. He refused either either offer that was made either to sell it or to exchange it. And while sometimes we might say we would not sell the truth, you know, beloved young people, we want to be careful about exchanging it, too. I don't like to make personal references. But in my own case, I was not raised among those gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. And I received as a young man among what we refer to as systems. And there was much light there where I was too. And there was blessing and all of that. And sometimes there is the tendency, I believe, on the part of those who were, who were, who have been raised among the gathered Saints, to think that perhaps there is more light there, there is more blessing there. That there are other

vineyards that look so much better. But it isn't necessarily so, because I believe there are those in this room who were raised in the truth. And who have never known what it is to be with systems. And they perhaps value the inheritance more than I do. You don't have to have to go out and be in other vineyards to really value this vineyard. If one receives it as from the Lord, if one enters into it as being that which God is given in His precious word according to the truth, one can value it without having to go out and sample other vineyards. If you have the truth, you know it's the truth.

Is an answer like neighbors they have I'll not give up my vineyard. You won't argue with him and say I'm going to compare it and say well now your vineyard is not better because of this and that. No, I'm not going to give up my vineyard. Beloved young people, if we have been, have been taught, have gone what little we know. I'm not speaking now about one who perhaps entered into great truth, but what little you know to be the truth of God. By maintaining and holding and walk in the light of it and if there's pressure that come. They come from the outside and say come with us, look what a nice vineyard we have. Look how successful we are. Look what we have to offer. Examine it according to the Word of God in the. You might see examine it according to the vineyard, the inheritance that you have received of the truth from the Word of God. And then may we take a stand like this man. They ball and say no. Well, we know that it cost this man his life. Wicked woman Jezebel had him put to death. It cost him his life. But he was faithful and he maintained it and he continued it. He followed the model of the Lord Jesus. In contrast to an Esau who sold out his birthright, in contrast to a Judah who would sell out. His brother Joseph, because he saw no value in him. He followed the model of the Lord Jesus Christ, so may there be the continuance as well as the maintenance. Of the truth, as the pressures increase and the word comes to us, Give me my price, and it's not for bear. May we full bear to set a price upon the precious truth in the Lord who has blessed us.

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