

WCCC 2015

Serving God's Purpose in Colossians

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Colossians: 1:1 – 5

Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus, by God's will, and Timotheus the brother, to the holy and faithful brethren in Christ which are in Colossae. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ continually when praying for you, having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which ye have towards all the saints, on account of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens; of which ye heard before in the word of the truth of the glad tidings,

Colossians 1: 9 – 10

For this reason we also, from the day we heard of your faith and love, do not cease praying and asking for you, to the end that ye may be filled with the full knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing by the true knowledge of God.

I would like brothers and sisters to focus on the words 'full knowledge of His will' and 'for this reason' in verse 9. Paul said 'for this reason' we were praying for you; and we prayed that you would be full of knowledge of His will. And what was the reason? The reason here was what we have read in the beginning verses of the epistle. They have lived according to the gospel that has been preached to them; also the gospel has given them a hope and this hope is laid up in heaven.

Colossians 1: 15

who is the image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation.

This talks about the beloved Son of God. It should be first born 'before' instead of 'of' all creation. In the Chinese translation, it was stated very clearly that He is before all creation.

Colossians 1: 16 – 18

because by him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities; all things have been created by him and for him. And he is before all, and all things subsist together by him. And he is the head of the body, the assembly; who is the beginning, firstborn from among the dead, that he might have the first place in all things.

Colossians 1: 27

to whom God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.

Prayer:

Lord we really thank You for giving us the opportunity to gather before You. Lord, our confidence is that You love us. We just pray that in this hour when we gather together that Your Holy Spirit will set us free; that we can really see Your beloved son; that we can be set free to serve Him. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, I think you all know the theme of this conference is 'To Serve God's Purpose'. The brothers have given me the assignment on 'to serve God's purpose' in Colossians.

We know that Colossians was written when Paul was in prison. At that time, he had two burdens. One burden is eternal – the eternal purpose of God which he wrote in the books of Colossians and Ephesians and to an extent in Philippians. At that time he was in prison and he had a burden for eternal things. He had another burden and that was the burden for the local brothers in Colossae and Laodicea. They had immediate local issues because there were speculations in ritual matters and these things were distracting them from the Lord. I actually thank the Lord that because of these distractions, Paul paid a lot of attention to many practical issues. And Paul also was very keen to these speculations. And so when he wrote the book of Colossians, he dealt with both eternal issues and immediate issues. He covered the eternal issues in the first, third and fourth chapters. And the immediate issues, he discussed in chapter 2. Because of the limit of time, we will concentrate on the eternal issues. However, if we have time we will also touch upon these distractions.

Brothers and sisters, when you read Colossians you can sense that Paul had some kind of specific burdens. The first thing is this matter of the eternal will of God that we already read in 1:9 which said we ought to have this full knowledge of God's will. And also at the end in chapter 4:12 when he talked about this brother by the name of Epaphras, he said '*Epaphras, who is one of you, the bondman of Christ Jesus, salutes you, always combating earnestly for you in prayers, to the end that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*'. You can see the first specific burden that he had from beginning to the end is the eternal will of God. The second word that always appears in Colossians is 'glory'. We read this verse – Christ in you the hope of glory. And then in chapter 3, he said 'when He appears, you will appear with Him in glory'. So from the beginning to the end, Paul also had this thought of glory. The third word is 'new'. In chapter 3, he talked about this new man – a man who is new in the knowledge of Christ. And then at the end of chapter 3, he talked about the new life between husband and wife, father and son, master and slave.

Thus another thought that Paul had in his mind is 'new'. And the fourth word that shows up often is 'present' or 'stand'. In chapter 1 he talked about Jesus reconciling us through Him - and then to present us holy and unblemished and beyond reproach. And again he talked about the same thing in 1: 28 '*...to the end that we may present every man perfect in Christ*'. And then at the very end in 4:12, he mentioned that Epaphras '*always combating earnestly for you in prayers, to the end that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God*'. So we see that this thing was pretty strong in Paul's mind. He said the Lord separates us and presents us holy and without blemish and beyond reproach. And Paul himself presented us perfect before God. And the service of Epaphras in his prayer was that brothers and sisters could stand before God in all His will. So these few things were very much in Paul's heart.

The first thing is the will of God. We read in 1:9 that Paul and Timothy have not ceased to pray for the saints in Colossae, when they knew that the gospel had reached the Colossians and that they had lived according to the gospel and that they knew they had a hope stored up in heaven. Then immediately they prayed for them so that they might be filled with the knowledge of the will of God. So brothers and sisters, what does this mean? It means that when we have the gospel, when we live according to it, we cannot just stop there. Gospel is a big word. Gospel will bring us to the very end. Therefore it is important for us to immediately know the will of God. Paul put it very strongly. He said to fill up in their spiritual wisdom and understanding with the will of God and that is to fill with the full knowledge of God. He actually said that if you do not know the will of God, then there will be a big gap in your spiritual wisdom. And there will be a big lacking in the spiritual understanding.

Brothers and sisters, this is not academic. According to I Corinthians chapter 2, spiritual wisdom is not wisdom from the world. It is the wisdom from God; it is for our glory. It is what eyes have not seen and ears have not heard, hearts have not considered. Totally strange and yet God has

given this spiritual wisdom to us. And it is for a reason, and the reason is glory – for our glory. So brothers and sisters, to know the will of God is a big thing. We feel this glory thing is kind of remote, but it really is not. The glory is with God and with God only. After we are saved, when we walked with God and are willing to walk the way of the cross; and we are willing to know His will; and we are willing to follow him; and we are willing to come out of ourselves and enter into His will, then what God desires starts to be true in you and me. Then God's heart is pleased and He manifests His pleasure. That is glory and we will know it. It is a very tremendous thing. So the wisdom of God which is spiritual wisdom is for our glory.

Spiritual understanding is the same thing. Spiritual understanding is not piecemeal. Spiritual understanding is our whole understanding of what we get from God. It has to be a whole understanding from beginning to the end. Peter said it well. He once said if someone asks you the reason for your hope, how you have prepared to respond to that question has to do with your spiritual understanding. So to know the will of God is extremely important. Otherwise when people ask us the reason for our hope, we will have a hard time giving them the answer. Also this word 'know' is the full knowledge. It is full knowledge, the whole thing. And the center of the will of God is the eternal purpose of God. And also it has to be something very accurate. When we read the bible we can find the specifics here and there. This knowledge is a thorough knowledge. It is in depth. It is applicable to our daily life. So you see the full knowledge of the will of God which is the eternal purpose of God is very important. And it applies to every aspect of our life. We can see that when we read the third chapter of Colossians. We become a new man who lives a new life. Brothers and sisters, what we are trying to say is that to know the will of God is extremely important. It is important to our thinking. It is important to our action. We simply cannot be without it. And we have to know it clearer and clearer as we grow up.

Now what is the will of God? Here Apostle Paul gave us a picture of Christ. This picture of Christ is the big picture. The first thing he said is Christ is the creator of all. Second thing he said is Christ is the head of the church and He is the firstborn from the dead. The third thing he said is that this new man is the church. And this new man has to be according to Christ and Christ has to be all and in all. So what Paul said in Colossians is that Christ is the will of God.

So the first thing he said about Christ is that He is the creator. He said Christ is the image of God and is the firstborn before all creation. Colossians 1:15-17 talk about this. It is about the relationship between Christ and the creation. In verse 18 Paul started to talk about the relationship between Christ and the church. And when he came to chapter 3, he said the church ought to be this new man – a new man according to Christ. And because of this matter of Christ being the image of God and the firstborn before creation, I would like to spend some time on it.

There are three things involved in these verses. The first thing is the image of God. The second is firstborn and third is the creation. With regards to the image of God, Christ is the only image of God. And Christ is the begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. Apostle John actually gave a testimony in the Gospel of John 1:18. *'No one has ever seen God at any time; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him'*. Brothers and sisters, this is a testimony; the testimony of John. The basis of that, first of course is revelation. But John also has been observing this thing for a long time. He met the Lord when he was young. The gospel of John was written in the 90s of the first century. Our brother has watched the Lord for three and half years. And after that for about 60 years, he was watching in the Holy Spirit, the Lord in heaven doing His work among His churches. And his conclusion was there was none other. No one has seen God before. The only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He declares him. And the author of the Book of Hebrews said the same thing. In the first chapter, he said the Lord Jesus is the radiance of His glory and the expression of His substance. The testimonies of these people and

Paul here said the same thing – Lord Jesus is the only image of God. We thank the Lord. Today the invisible becomes the visible to us. And the glory of God now shines on the face of Jesus. We may not be able to describe the invisible God but we can in detail describe the Lord Jesus. We thank the Lord. Today we are able to see the invisible on the face of the visible, the glory of Jesus Christ.

We now talk about the firstborn. He said Christ is the firstborn of all creation. A few verses down it said Christ is before all things. So when it talks about the firstborn, it talks about an order.

There are two aspects of this order. The first aspect is about the position. The second aspect is about time. Now here it said he is the only begotten Son of the Father. So He is way above everything else. He is the only Son. He and the Father share the same life. We also are called sons of God. But we are the adopted sons. And also the gospel of John said because we received Jesus Christ as our savior we are given the right to be called sons. We are either the adoptions or are given the right to be called sons. Christ alone is the only begotten Son of God. All the other things that are created are far below Him. One thing about the order of this firstborn is position.

He is supreme. He is way above everything else. He is way up there. We cannot touch. And then he said He is firstborn before time. We can see it in many places. The most important thing is where the Lord Jesus Himself said. In the Gospel of John 17:5, the Lord said *'Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was'*. So He is way before when the universe was created. And in 17:24 the Lord also said *'...for You loved me before the foundation of the world'*. So dear brothers and sisters, if somebody tells you because of the word 'firstborn', thus the Lord is one of the creations that is totally not true. In position He is way above everything else. In terms of time He is way before everything else. He was with the Father in the beginning. He is not only the beginning but He is also the end. So brothers and sisters, this is for us to remember.

Here verse 16 said something very important concerning this creation. It said all things were created in Him, through Him, unto Him and for Him. So this tells us it is created in Him through His initiation. It is His thinking and according to His character. Through Him is by His power. He did it. And finally unto Him or for Him is that He is the one who received this whole thing. So He is the beginning, through Him and finally back to Him. It is just like building a house; in Him is that He is the architect; in His thought, in His initiation. Through Him is that He is the builder. He actually built this house. And finally for or unto Him it is that He is the inheritor. Brothers and sisters, this is hard for us to imagine but this is absolutely true.

Then it goes on to say that He is the creator of the visible and invisible. I think it is hard for us to see that Christ is the creator of all the visible things. A hundred years ago before 1915 no scientist believed that the universe had a beginning. But today if you read the science book of the elementary school, it said the universe has a beginning. And in these hundred years, the biggest issue of this development is Genesis 1:1. Many scientists said if we accept Genesis 1:1, then this universe does have a beginning and Genesis 1:1 is true. But they said Genesis 1:1 cannot be true. And from 1915 to 1995 there was this debate on the origin of the universe. 1915 was when Einstein had his theory of relativity which are some pure math equations. And then two young men figured out how to solve these equations. And they reached the conclusion that the universe started from nothing; that it happened on the day where there was no yesterday. And then suddenly it happened just like the fireworks on July 4th. Einstein could not believe it. He told them their math was very good but their physics was lousy. A few years later the astronomers in southern California observed some of the stars and they found these stars are all extended far outward. Einstein came and observed. He agreed the results were right. And then he agreed with these two young men that the beginning of the universe was like what they found. So they concluded the universe had a beginning. From that point on till 1995 there were many arguments

about this point from various angles. Finally in 1995, there were new results and one investigator called a conference. The night before the conference he could not sleep. He knew the result would be earth quaking. The next day he showed the result. He said look at this picture; if you are religious, then this is the face of God.

Romans 1:20 said the universe that was made will lead us see the eternal power and divinity of God. So with regards to creation, God is the one who created the earth. And thank the Lord there are people who received the revelations from God. In the Gospel of John chapter 1, John said 'In the beginning was the word and the Word was with God and the Word was God'. John said He created everything. Nothing that was created was not by Him. This is wonderful. Another thing is that in all these creation, there is an order. When it started you know exactly what is going to happen some years later. So the universe has an order. Our brother Paul said the universe is now held together by Him. Maybe in the physical world it is hard for us to relate but then our Lord Jesus is also the creator of the invisible. This is something you and I can experience. Romans 4:17 talks about Abraham and when it talks about the experience of Abraham, it concludes with something like this, Abraham believed in a God that can quicken the dead and He then called into existence that which does not exist. So our God is the creator of things related to us. In the case of Abraham it meant he gave birth to Isaac; then he offered Isaac and got it back. If you really read the context of chapter 4 in Romans, it really talks about the whole experience of Abraham.

For myself, when I was in high school and college, I was not saved. I did not know the purpose of my life. I was seeking to find out the meaning of life. And in the process I was trying to find a person in history that I would admire without reservation. But in my entire high school years and in my entire college years, I had not found anyone. I could not find it in history. I could not find it anywhere. Then I met some Christians. And they told me to read the bible about Jesus. When I read about Jesus I found in Him someone who is far superior to anything. Everyone born into the

world is selfish. Now this Jesus is never selfish. He never thought about Himself. And I found that this person is far superior to anything. Then when I became a Christian I started to learn to walk with Him. My adoration for Him has never changed. And His superiority never ends and there is no limit to it. So brothers and sisters, as far as I am concerned, this superiority is created by Him. I believe this is your experience too. And in my salvation, I was not a believer. Yet He met me, He tutored me and ushered me to walk with Him. And finally I look at the future; I find He is the one who started the whole process. He created my salvation. He met me. He leads me and finally one day when I leave the earth, I will go back to Him. As far as I am concerned He is the beginning and He is the end. So brothers and sisters I believe it is the same for you. When I see so many children around today, I really thank the Lord. I believe one of these days, the Lord will meet every single one of them. And the Lord will lead them through their life. And at the end of their life, when they look back, they will thank the Lord for having found them and having been with them and having led them. So dear brothers and sisters, for you and for me, the Lord Jesus is the creator of the invisible.

The next matter is about Jesus being the head of the church and the firstborn from the dead. If you read Colossians 1: 18 there are these two elements in there. The first is that He is the head of the church. The second is that He is the firstborn from the dead. Now as to His being the head of the church, you all know this. But I want to mention two things. One thing is that the Head means that He is the absolute authority and the second thing is that He is the source – the source of the flow of life. Colossians 2:19 said ‘hold fast the head’. When we hold fast the head, His life flows into us. First thing, He is the absolute authority. Second thing, He is the source of all spiritual things. When I was young I have help from a couple of brothers. There was once a brother who came from overseas. He gave a series of messages. And we young brothers were all fired up. Some of us invited this brother to our house to dinner. Now here I am talking about Christ being

the head; and Christ being the head in reality, not just talk. We were very zealous, asking this brother many questions. This brother quickly detected that we had a problem. He felt we honored him more than we honored the Lord. So he said, 'brothers, this time I can help you a little bit. But very soon you have to go to the Lord Jesus Christ to get help'. Many years later, I met another brother. He came to us and told me and some other brothers and sisters that if a brother or sister came to you and asked you a question, do not just give them your answer. Lead them to the Lord so they can ask the question of the Holy Spirit. The brother meant this; you have to step aside, bring him and lead him to the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord that those things really help me. Christ being the head has to be real in our life. When we serve the Lord together in the church, Christ being the head is something we need to remember all the time. David said in Psalm 16: 8, 'I have set Jehovah continually before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved'. So dear brothers and sisters, when we serve the Lord, when we serve brothers and sisters in the church, the Lord Jesus has to be always before us. He is always the Head in reality.

Now the second thing is about being the firstborn from the dead. When we talk about Him being the firstborn over or before creation, He is way up there and you cannot touch. None of us can touch. He is way up there. He is superior. But when Paul talked about Him being the firstborn from the dead, He is so close to us. Paul meant that the Lord's resurrection became our experience as well. It has to become our experience too. He came to us; He dwells in us and He leads us forward. He actually leads us to die with Him; to be buried with Him and to be risen with Him. Thank the Lord. I think from this point on our brother Paul fired up inside. Now from this point on he talked about something real in you and in me. It sounds dreadful because he talked about dying and burial. It was very dreadful. But then he talked about resurrection. He really implied this, unless we are willing to die with Him, there is no hope for glory; there is no hope of being a new man; there is no hope of living a new life. We have to be willing to die with Him. That is

essentially what our brother said last night. This is a pivot point in what Paul said. So from this point onwards, it is action. From this point on is challenge. From this point on if we accept it, we are on the way to glory; if we do not accept it, it is death. So we thank the Lord. Immediately after, Paul talked about Jesus Christ reconciling us with His death. Now here Paul touched on this point of glory. He said Jesus Christ reconciled us with His death to present us holy, without blemish and blameless before our Father. To reconcile constitutes healing something in the past. Paul said Christ is going to present us holy and without blemish. This is hard for us to imagine. But there are two points. First, Christ did it. Just like when He was crucified on the cross He said it is finished. All that is necessary for us to be holy and to be without blemish, and to be beyond reproach He has done it. And it is appropriate for us in our own lives. If we are willing to die with him, if we are willing to be buried with him and if we are willing to be raised with him, Paul said what Christ has done now became a fact in us. Brothers and sisters, there is something incredible. He is going to make you and me holy and without blemish. These two words, holy and without blemish appear in Ephesians 5. There Paul said the Lord Jesus loves the church and has delivered Himself for the church in order that He can present the church holy and without blemish. And he called that the glorious church. Here the Lord Jesus reconciled us to Himself. His aim is very, very high. His aim is a glorious church. His aim is for you and me to be glorious. Brothers and sisters, you may say that although Paul said that in Ephesians, yet he did not clearly said that in Colossians. But very quickly Paul came to chapter 1:27 and he said 'Christ in you the hope of glory'. Brothers and sisters, 'you' mean the saints; with 'you' in plural. This is exactly like what Ephesians said. He said Christ in you the hope of glory. How does that happen? Again, Christ is the firstborn from the dead. And because of that He wants us to die with Him. He wants us to be buried with Him and raised with Him.

Actually when we come to Colossians 2: 11-12 Paul said there was a circumcision called the circumcision of the Christ. And this circumcision was to take away the flesh. And then he said you and I are also circumcised in that circumcision and you and I are buried in baptism. And then he said we are raised with Him. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the beginning of glory. After that, we are living a risen life. The risen life is the life of the Lord Jesus and not the old flesh. This was what Paul wanted to show us. Here he said we are baptized. Baptism is more than just a declaration. According to Paul here and according to Romans 6, baptism really is a renewal. And then the old man was buried with Christ; death. And when we came out of the water, we walk in the newness of life. If not all, most of us are baptized. Baptism is more than just a declaration. Baptism is our willingness to die with Christ, to be buried with Him and to be raised with Him. And when we came out of the water, it is the resurrection life in you and me. We thank the Lord. When we have this risen life, Paul said in chapter 3, if we are risen with Christ, and then we should seek the things above where Christ is. Now you have died. Your life is hidden in Christ with God. Now Christ is your life. When He appears, you will appear with Him in glory. What does this mean? It means when we are risen with the Lord, if we are willing to die with Him, to be buried with Him and to be raised with Him, then we should seek things with Christ. We will be thinking of the things where Christ is. Thank the Lord. That governs our walk on earth. So when the time comes, when the Lord appears, we will appear with Him in glory. So brothers and sisters, this is something for us to believe in. Not only Paul said that, John said that too. In 1 John 3, he said we do not know how it will be, but then when Christ Jesus appears, we will be like Him. When He appears we can see Him as He is, and then you will have a big discovery and that discovery is that you will be just like Him. But there is a condition and that is at the end of chapter 2. Do we abide in Him? If we abide in Him, when He appears, we will not be ashamed. When He appears we will not be afraid. This is a wonderful promise from both Apostle Paul and Apostle John. We ought to

believe, we ought to go to the Lord and ask Him to give us that faith to walk this way, to abide in Him and to seek things from above; to be mindful of things above and let these things govern our life on earth. And then Paul said when He appears we will be appearing with Him in glory.

Brothers and sisters, here Paul and John talked about when He appears we will be like him. This thing we actually can taste even today because when the Lord said He reconciled us to Him, holy and without blemish, He is not talking only about the future. And then Paul also said he taught and he worked so that we can be presented perfect. This is not just a promise about the future. This is what we can experience today. In my own little experience as well as in observation of brothers and sisters, when we come to a very difficult situation, at home or in relationship, God finally would give us grace to be willing to die. And then wonderful things happened and our life changed. I have seen brothers and sisters as husband and wife that for some reasons they were driven apart, could not stand each other. But then the Lord spoke to one of them, and he came back. Why? It was because the Lord told him to. Things changed and she was changed and the husband was changed. Brothers and sisters, if we are willing to die, new things happen and we can see the Lord. We can see Him being pleased, being glorified and we have a new life.

There is Mary of Bethany in the Gospel of John 11. Mary was unhappy because the Lord did not come immediately. And the Lord said I delayed so you could see the glory of God. This was hard for Mary and Martha to take. So when the Lord came, Mary said and Martha said, Lord, if you had come earlier my brother would not have died. But then the Lord said, I am the resurrection, I am the life. If you believe, you will see the glory of God. The Lord raised Lazarus from the death. Mary was a very sensitive person. She loved the Lord. Mary and Martha thought the Lord loved them just like loving friends. So they wrote to the Lord, the one you love was sick. But they did not know that God has a much greater love, the agape love; not just to them but to everyone. And even to them it was not just to solve their problem, but that they could see the glory of the Lord.

So after their brother was raised, Mary had much chance to consider and to think. Then Mary saw the wonderful resurrection power of the Lord and she saw the agape love. And she also saw the wisdom of the Lord; she also saw the surpassing greatness of our Lord Jesus. On that day she also saw the smallness of herself. She also realized that very soon Jesus was going to die for her. So that day she broke the nard and poured it out. It was her life saving for marriage, and she used that as a sacrifice for the Lord. And she used this as her praise for the Lord. The fragrance filled the whole room. The Lord Jesus said wherever the gospel is preached you have to tell the story of what this woman did. And the fragrance, even here today is with us. So brothers and sisters, Mary experienced death with Christ, burial with Christ, risen with Christ and glory with Christ. So dear brothers and sisters, it is also for each one of us.

To die is very difficult. We know it is important for us to die as said in Colossians 1. But to die is very hard. If I am not an excellent person, I am at least a perfect person. And if I am not a perfect person, then at least I am a good person. How can I give that up? I think if I ask my wife whether I am an excellent person, she probably said no. Am I perfect? You are not perfect. How about good? I do not know; you go ask your son this question. I think he will very politely said essentially the same thing. And you ask your coworker, he probably will not even answer. There is really nothing good in us. We can throw it away and we lose nothing.

How can we die? What makes us willing to die? Our brother mentioned Galatians 2:20 yesterday. I think for Paul, the secret of being willing to die with Christ was love and glory. He said 'I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me'. Today I live not by myself but by faith in Him. He could have stopped the sentence right there and lose nothing in terms of instructions. But then he continued to say Christ loves me and gives Himself for me. I think that is the reason Paul was willing to die with Christ. It is because 'He loves me and gave Himself for me'. There is no other reason. There is another point. From now on, no longer I that

live but Christ lives in me. This is the beginning of glory. 'No longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me'. That is the beginning of the hope of glory. This was what Paul said about himself. How about us? Paul also said similar things in 2 Corinthians 5. When he talked about this new creation, he said the love of Christ constrained me. Now we judge that one died for all and all died. Thank the Lord. The reason we can die is because he died and because the love of Christ constrains us. This is the reason why these people were willing to die with Christ. But brothers and sisters, it is also for the hope of glory because they said that from now on they do not live unto themselves, but they live unto Him who died and was raised for them. We live for the one who has died and has risen for us. What does that mean? That is the beginning of glory for us to get. Thank the Lord. This is what happened to Paul. And this is what Paul said can happen to you and me. It is the love of Christ who constrains me. One died for all and all died. And today we live, no longer live to ourselves but live unto him who died and rose for us.

Lord, we thank You, we praise You. We often think we are not worthy and indeed we are not worthy. But Lord, You have so highly esteemed us. You want us to die with You, to be buried with You, to be raised with You and You will lead us to glory. And You call us Your brothers. Lord, we really thank You. Lord, in our life on earth we will exalt You to be supreme. We honor Your name especially in the church, in our home and Lord we will honor Your name above everything. You are the preeminent. You are the first. Lord we are willing to follow You so Your mind concerning us can be accomplished. Thank You Lord, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.