

WCCC 2023

Brother Dana Congdon

Keep the word of My patience (1)

Praise God that I could be with you in these days. The brothers have graciously asked me to come and share in this time of ministry. They let me rest a few days to get over jet lag, so they let me speak last, which I thought was a blessing at that time. They let me join the harvest at Boaz's feet.

But then the first brother came along and spoke on the testimony of Jesus, and I thought he had harvested everything at that point. Then I saw the next brother coming the other way with the eternal purpose of God, and I said, "Oh no!". Then the final straw with God's heavenly vision, and I was done.

So I hope to find a few sheaves of barley like Ruth, and brother Ted even spoke on Ruth. Then I looked down on my notes and saw my topic. They only gave me two words: Hold fast.

I have to speak 3 times on "Hold fast". Those are only 2 words. That will make a brother pray, "Lord, give me something". So I did what every good, deep godly man does. I searched in the Bible for every reference to "hold fast". And that's where the first interesting thing arrested my attention.

In fact, a number of times, the brethren are asked to hold fast. Most of the time it was directly "hold fast to the Lord". And sometimes, to "hold fast to His Word". But what arrested my attention was the context in which this commandment was given.

The command to "hold fast" was given to the saints at the moment of epic change. When there was some kind of transition in kingdom life.

Now let me give you a couple of examples.

At the end of Deuteronomy chapter 30, verses 19 and 20. Now Moses is not going to go across the Jordan, but the children are. And so, Moses tells them, "in a time like this, when you cross into the Promised Land, hold fast".

I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Deuteronomy 3:19-20

It was a time of tremendous change - their lives would never be the same again. It was time to remind them to hold on to the One who brings them to the Promised Land.

Again, in Joshua 23, we find Joshua doing the same thing. They were already in the land. So as Joshua exhorts the children, in verse 8:

but you shall hold fast to Jehovah your God, as you have done to this day.

Joshua 23:8

So, now the children have been in the land and have gained their inheritance. Now they need to learn to hold fast to this inheritance in the Lord.

As we go right down in the New Testament, let us find a few passages along this line.

In Colossians 2:19. Now the Colossians were young Christians who were very intelligent. They were dealing with the Greek culture around them. But in the midst of their young lives, they were losing their grip on the Lord Jesus. Religion, philosophy is replacing Christ. So we all know this verse where Paul says,

and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Colossians 2:19

Isn't it amazing, as Christians hold on fast to the Head, it allows the body to grow?

And then in the book of Hebrews 10:23, we come upon this phrase again. For these Hebrew Christians was about to lose everything they had known about Jerusalem, about the temple, its sacrifices. And as they were about to lose by the great shaking of the Roman Empire of Jerusalem,

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

Which brings us to our theme verse in Revelations 3:11. And what is the context here? All of our stuff in the Laodecian church, the Lord speaks to Philadelphians, saying

Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.
Revelations 3:11

This is for people just before Christ returns. That is why the challenge to hold fast is upon us at the end of the age. Well, we all thought that America was perhaps the most stable country in the world. But I think you realize this great shaking going on.

Every government, every country has a shelf life. Democracy only works when you have godly, responsible people. Freedom is sacrificed when people aren't willing to sacrifice. And our beautiful tricameral government loses its effectiveness through money and corruption. I think you know this already. Don't put all your cryptocurrency on the United States.

But you know, since the pandemic, there has been a tremendous shakeup caused by the Lord on the church. There is a group of Christians who take polls and check on what the state is on the church across the United States. They have recently discovered that attendance has gone down in Evangelical church - all the born-again Christians in the United States - from 56% to 35%.

One wonders why so many people dropped out. The Lord has shaken, and some people have been shaken out. Of course, we know that there have been problems with preachers and all the immorality that has been going around.

We see that 20% of the United Methodist Church has pulled out of the denomination over gender issues. Now the study also says that Charismatic and Missional (those that preach the gospel regularly) are still growing. But through these things, at least we can see in our latest shaking, that Christians have a hard time holding fast to their kingdom treasure.

And we know, because probably in this day, that saints live in the Laodecian church. We need not play with words, but rather acknowledge that Mammon and money has caused the church's decline. But when the Lord speaks to us in Revelation, He doesn't seem bothered by it. He simply says, "For those who have an ear, hear and hold fast till I come."

Because my dear 3 brothers have taken everything good to say in my messages, I want to look first at the basis of this command to "hold fast". How is it that the Lord can ask you to hold fast?

The answer is very simple but very important. We are asked to hold fast because God, by His covenant of blood, holds fast to us.

Before the fall in the garden of Eden, no covenant was necessary. Our God held fast to Adam and Eve, and they held fast to Him as they walked in the cool of the day. But you find in every civilization since the fall, covenants by blood were necessary for the continued existence of humankind.

Now people used to war endlessly, but discovered that by making a covenant in blood, they would agree: "that we won't fight you, you won't fight us". So they made sacrifices in blood and made a treaty, "don't come beyond this stone, and we won't come beyond this stone." That is how tribes kept alive. They said, "I swear on my blood, I won't kill you".

This is also the marriage covenant in the ancient days. "I will take your daughter and I swear I will take care of her. And if I don't, you can kill me".

So covenants were a matter of life and death. And God made a covenant with Israel to keep them alive despite Israel's sin. Sin brings judgment and death, but God who is merciful not only put a rainbow in the sky, but gave them covenants by blood. But as all covenants were, so the covenant in Sinai involved 2 partners. And God in His mercy and love goes first and said, "I will hold fast to you. I will bless you. I will protect you. I will forgive you. By blood. I will hold fast to you."

In Isaiah 43, God says this to His children in verse 1:

But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name;
You are Mine.
Isaiah 43:1

You can just feel God's loving grip upon Israel, "You are mine." So we know that holding fast is a grip of love.

So we find in the better covenant, the new covenant in which we live.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Maybe you didn't know this side of the covenant when you were saved. You have been bought. Now He holds fast to you. But of course in every agreement and every covenant, there must be

the other side that holds fast to the Lord. So as it happens in the ancient day, God would say, "choose who you will serve. Hold fast to me".

Or as God would say in the famous shema, "Here O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is One. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your might, and all your heart and all your strength."

Now in the Old Testament covenants, we know from the history we read in the scriptures, the saints were not able to hold fast. The Lord would hold fast, the people would backslide. And so the Lord would come back to them. They would have to repent, and He would have to speak His covenant once again. And everyone would say "yes, yes we will hold fast!". And as soon as they said that they would start to slip away. Whether it is the book of Judges or what happens during the kings, it makes no difference, it is the same story.

And so God had to bring the Lord Jesus to this earth in order to make this whole covenant work. How does it work? By blood.

God, through Jesus Christ, shed blood, to hold fast to us. But Jesus, as a perfect Redeemer, can hold fast to God. And those who are in Christ hold fast to God. Even unto the death on the cross, Christ held on to God the Father. Now praise God, in Christ we hold fast to God. And even more wonderfully, which we will touch on, is the great mystery: Christ in you holds you fast.

So this two-sided covenant becomes fixed, a better covenant, in the blood of Christ Jesus. Have you come into that covenant? Then you are caught. There is no escape. You must hold fast to your God.

Now this is a wonderful, eternal covenant. But as our dear brothers are talking about God's eternal covenant, there is a mystery there.

I know some of your lives are very mysterious because you don't know what you are doing. It is possible that Generation Z could become 50 years old without finding a job. But meanwhile God is working in a mystery of His eternal purpose. That is, something He has completed in eternity, He is bringing in time to complete in you and I.

How can I describe this? Only brother Godwin can describe this. It is a mystery that he says he understands.

So in eternity we are totally saved, and yet in time we are being saved. So our sanctification is perfect, and yet we are being sanctified. And in eternity we are already glorious, but in time, we are transitioning from glory to glory.

So whether you like it or not, the Lord is holding fast to you by His strong grip. I think our brother on the first night talked about this word “hold fast”. It means to cling, to grip something really strongly. How strong is saving grace? Can anyone snatch you out of His hand?

Well, of course not! Because His precious blood keeps holding us fast, even when we sin. And the finished work on the cross holds us fast in death and resurrection as He crucifies our flesh. And the Word of God holds us fast as He renews our mind and takes every thought captive in Christ. The Holy Spirit holds us fast as He takes us through the disciplines and increases Christ in our lives.

Here is an eternal mystery: He holds us fast through sufferings as we come to be drawn to Christ even more.

So how can I put this mystery? That Christ in you is holding fast to the Christ in glory. This is so important for a Christian to grasp that Paul spends much time in his epistles on this matter of understanding Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Over 30 years ago I came to my first WCCC. And they put me in a locked room with teenagers. I barely came out alive, but somehow managed. I told the young people that they were saved, it is too late, there is no escape, because God has you hooked already in His spiritual carwash.

You drive into this place innocently enough and something grabs your tires, and then they just say “put it in neutral”. You can try to reverse your way out but you’ll just wear your tires out. You can roll down your windows and say “I want out”, but you’ll just get wet. You are going through the carwash till you get to the other side, perfect in Christ.

I don’t think you believe that. I think you think you can get out of the carwash. I know this is an imperfect analogy. Some people get through the carwash pretty quick and some people put the brakes on all the way through.

But this raises the question now doesn’t it? If He’s holding fast to you and you are holding fast to Him, why all these exhortations in the Bible to hold fast? Why does He have to do that? It is not that you have let go. It is that you have forgotten what you are holding fast to.

So, as in the book of Revelation, we will see that the Lord is doing nothing more than reminding His saints to hold fast to the treasures that they have.

Now since our brothers have snatched Ephesians out of my hands, and snatched Acts 26 and the heavenly vision out, I am taking as my possession all of John’s writings. And so, I want to speak from the gospel of John, the letters of John and the book of Revelation on holding fast.

Some of you I can already see are closing your eyes in deep prayer. But I hope I won't strain too much in this matter. You know our dear brother John. He was such a faithful apostle. He loved the Lord so much. It meant so much to him to live and know his Beloved. So we all know that by the end of that generation, as John was now the only surviving apostle, that the saints were losing their grip on the Lord Jesus.

As we saw in the picture of John, his sort of his secondary ministry, he saw that the nets were broken, and he came to mend the nets. Whether it is through his gospels or his letters, or the book of Revelation, there was one burden in his heart: bring the church back to Jesus. That is recovery. Just bringing the church back to Jesus.

By the end of John's life, by reading the book of Revelation or even church history, that the church was losing their grip. During that time, the church was very religious, but they were holding on to outward religious things. The wineskin was being broken.

As I will be talking about holding fast, I will let the brothers deal with your personal life. This is a corporate matter in the book of Revelation.

We remember how the dear prophet in the book of Hebrews tried to talk the Jews out of holding fast to the shadows of Judaism when there was the full reality of Christ. You remember even in the day of Paul, as he tells the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians, to stop looking at the apostles outwardly, by how tall they are, how good their diction is. "You're looking at things outwardly, not reality".

It is like the church got busy in the temple with all the furnishings and things, but forgotten that they misplaced the ark. So let us just fly over the gospel of John.

You know that John is a gospel that was given so that people could believe in Jesus Christ and receive eternal life. And in this gospel he promises in John 10:28-29

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

John 10:28-30

I think this is our favorite evangelistic gospel. I just recently gave a copy of the gospel of John to somebody seeking the Lord. But underneath this gospel there is a whole second level of trying to recover the church to grasping to God's loving grip.

Now in a sense it hard for John to explain what it was like to have walked with Jesus. He heard Him, he touched Him. One day he saw the kingdom of God because he saw the King is in their midst. And John repented and got caught up in a life with Christ as my daily portion for 3 years.

Every day, in some way, was centered around Jesus. Living in heaven's tableland, on higher ground.

But when Jesus was lifted up into the cloud and John saw Him disappear, I suppose to John's great surprise, the Spirit came down at Pentecost and John found that he was still living in this Christ-absorbed environment called the Church.

They couldn't wait to gather. They continued steadfastly on the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers. They loved being together because Jesus was all in all. And the kingdom that he saw was so large. The saints seemed, in their normal small life, larger than life. You remember how when the disciples were brought before the Sanhedrin, that they could tell that they had been with Jesus. As a matter of fact, this became John's problems and why he was exiled to Patmos. Because he bore the testimony of Jesus.

This has an objective side and a mystical side. On the objective side, John could talk about who Jesus was and the things Jesus did. There were a lot of Christian preachers around who were preaching Jesus, but they weren't as dangerous as John was to the Romans. John was so dangerous because when he said, "let me tell you something about Jesus," it was as if Jesus came into the room. As he spoke the things about Jesus that were true, those things became real to the people who were listening too.

You see, the testimony about Jesus isn't only what you say about Jesus, but what Jesus says about Himself through your life. That is why some of you are so dangerous. I think you may have a wanted poster in the church of Satan with your name on it.

John was living in this environment where the church was so large it was spreading throughout the world.

Can you imagine doubting Thomas going to India and starting the church there? Now he had tasted some Szechuan food which was pretty hot but he wasn't ready for India. And he didn't know the language but that was no barrier. You go there, learn the language, and the church is born. How big is that? It was Christ above and over them, enthroned, working by His Spirit. This was the age of the Spirit. Christ was all in all.

After a generation, without the vision, the people perished. The people began to lose their grip. You have to understand that Paul's heavenly vision wasn't something he saw on Thursday in 32 A.D. It was something that remained upon him as he obeyed that vision. But by the end of the first century, I am not sure you could call the church a Christ-centered church.

Things became practical and outward. Servants of God found themselves being given offices, titles, positions, status. Where there were rituals that replaced life, doctrines that replaced light. The distinguishing mark of the testimony of Jesus which is Philadelphia, that is brother love,

was sadly missing. So we had a strange anomaly happening in the first century. The church was increasing in size in leaps and bounds, but Christ was decreasing. The church increases, Christ decreases. The size and vision of Christ got smaller. And even as theology tried to describe His bigness, the reality of His life in their midst decreased. They could talk about His size in dimensions and proportions and all kinds of philosophical ways, but His presence in their midst was missing.

That is what makes it so hard for the church in Seattle, or L.A., or New York. Because outward things are necessary. You have to have order, meetings, teaching and traditions. But these are only as it were clay vessels to hold the life of Christ. At some point we take the wineskin as more important than the wine, the vessel as more important than the life that is within it.

In short, the church, as it was becoming an institution, was losing the reality of the body of Christ. And that, which the early saints and our brother Godwin understood, about the church being the Christ, was now becoming a little metaphorical.

Now John is watching all of this, and in a parallel way he watched the demise of Jerusalem Judaism as the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. So John wrote a gospel showing how the Jewish system had lost its life and its institution. And using it as a metaphor to the Christian church that was gaining its institution but losing its life. So what is John's recovery picture for the church? The logos became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

He brought the Christians right back to the moment when he was with Jesus. And John beheld something. Even as the temple was now destroyed and had passed away, it had been replaced by a new tabernacle - Jesus who came and restored the glory to the tabernacle. And so 40 times in the gospel is the word "glory". In other words, the church needs to recover the glory of Christ.

How do you do that? It is very easy. Replace the "I am" back into every part of our lives. "I am the bread", "I am the light", "I am the way". Get that back in the church. But he used this series of pictures and episodes in Jesus' life to make this clear for those Christians looking for the real thing. The glory that was seen in Jesus was full of grace that was being lost, and full of reality.

So here's the story for the church in chapter 2. The church is like a wedding that had run out of wine. You remember when the saints couldn't wait to get together and meet Jesus? But now the writer of the Hebrews had to write "don't forsake assembling together". What happened?

This should really humble us, brothers and sisters. We could wish that our children couldn't wait to get to that Sunday meeting. But if we just ran out of wine, the joy seems to disappear from our church life. It has become an obligation. You got disconnected from "I am the true vine from which all your life flows".

Now John 3 is that story of Nicodemus. Wonderful lessons on salvation. How about a lesson for us? Do you come to Jesus and say, "teach us about the kingdom". Jesus says, "doctrines are no good, unless you are born of the Spirit and see the kingdom of God." Kingdom doctrines need to be replaced sometimes by kingdom reality.

How about John 4, the woman at the well? "Where do we worship? This mountain, that mountain?" It is not a question of location. It is a matter of finding worshippers in spirit and reality. You can think of the history of the church down through the ages where people rediscovered the reality after living in bondage of the church and its deadly traditions.

I don't know if you have heard about John Hus and the saints there in Czechoslovakia. They were born again Christians living in the Catholic church. And then John Hus got a revelation that Christians are allowed to have the wine as well as the bread. So he went up onto a mountain outside of Prague with 32,000 Christians and for the first time ever in their life, they took the cup as well as the bread, and the heavens came down. And those Hussites lived under an open heaven even after John Hus was burned at the stake because he let Christians drink the magic wine that had been turned into the blood of Christ, you see.

And then the reminder, that the brothers are reminding us this week, in John 5. You can search the scriptures all you want to find all kinds of things, but they all point to Jesus. If you don't see that, your study of the scriptures is pretty dead.

Have you ever been in somebody's house, having a Bible study. There was a brother in charge of the meeting, so he studied what Watchman Nee said about Genesis, and what the scholars need about Genesis, and what Calvin said about Genesis. But as he gave the Bible study, rather than rivers of life coming out, *cough cough* dry dust came out. Dry dust fell on our bibles. The Bible study started at 8 o'clock. By 8:15 you are looking at your watch. The brother says "bear with me, you must bear the cross".

In chapter 6 of John, it is all about communion and how it is a sacrament and it is changed into the body and the blood...blah blah...no it isn't. If we don't have "I am the bread of life" in our communion, our communion is a ritual.

Or in John 9, the man born blind. Vision doesn't come by finding out who has sinned. Vision comes when you see who is the Light.

John 10. It is not about many folds with many hirelings. The church has got one good Shepherd and one flock.

And even in John 14. "I am going to prepare the Father's house for you". So we are all looking forward to heaven and the Father's house. But Jesus says, "in that day, you will know that I am

in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you". And that is the Father's house. For so many of you, I know this is true. Do you remember the day you discovered the church was an abiding place? A living abiding with the Father, the Son and the saints.

So when John presents the gospel, he also has this recovery idea underneath to restore the glory to the church.

So brothers and sisters, where are we today? Where is the "I am" in our lives? That is a very powerful first-hand experience of Christ itself. As we gather now, because we are talking about the church in a corporate context, let's say we are the temple of God; is the ark of His glory there? We are the church and we are the lampstand, but where is the testimony of Jesus?

We have learned through experience that the church becomes very small when men take over the church. But when Christ is the center and circumference of our church life, there is glory.

Now I just want to touch on the epistles now that we have gone through the whole gospel of John. Because John is just as concerned to recover something besides just the outward presence of the glory of God. And of course, my brother Godwin spoke about it last night. He stole that part of my barley field.

It all has to do with a simple word you find throughout the first letter of John. It is that word "knowing". 38 times in that short letter. "Knowing God".

Last night, brother Godwin was talking about "ginosko". Now John is talking about "epiginosko", that means deeper knowledge. Knowledge through experience with something.

You are not going to believe this, but when I went to college I majored in business. God has a great sense of humor because I have never done any business. When it came time for graduation, the economics department gave me the award for the "highest scholar in business". I got a year's subscription to the Wall Street Journal for free. But I have never worked a day in my life in business. But I was married to my wife and her father is a businessman, and I became a slave in that business. He is one of those guys who says "let's start him at the bottom and see if he works his way up".

So I'm working in the garment factory. I'm spreading out the garments. Working in the shipping, boxing these 60-pound boxes full of jeans and tying them up with straps. That's epiginosko business. Oh I learned business.

John wants to recover epiginosko to the same church that is losing its reality. In the gospel he is trying to recover that sense of the glory of God's presence in their midst. But there is a commensurate key to glory, and that is to know Christ in you, the hope of glory.

We often hear this word “shekinah glory”. What does that mean exactly? “Shekinah” is a Hebrew word that means presence. And what the Jewish rabbis specifically mean by shekinah glory is not the outer glory of a cloud and fire that came upon the temple, but a sense of the presence of His glory when we came to the temple during the feasts. The rabbis say that shekinah glory, that sense of God is here, remained in Solomon’s temple until it was destroyed. When it was later rebuilt by Zerubbabel, there was no shekinah.

We need to not only hold fast to the glory of the greatness of who Christ is without in the church, but we need to know in our experience the Christ who lives within. The enemy of our souls focuses us continually on outward things. And we learn to rely on the knowledge that comes from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But all the time, the overcoming life in us is dependent on our knowing Christ in us, the hope of glory.

John speaks in the midst of a people, as he writes his letters, who have sensed the antichrist among them, who have sensed the temptations and lusts of the world in their midst, who sensed spirits of error in their midst. And he says, “how do you overcome?” Over 40 times, “abide in Him, abide in Him. There is an anointing within that tells you the truth. Abide, abide, abide”.

Our dear brother Kaung left 2 impressions in my life as he went to be with the Lord. Both of them came out of his inner knowing - experiential knowing - of Christ within. I think you remember the last words he spoke to us was “the Lord is coming soon”. You see the hope of glory was burning like a light. That is what the hope of glory is. The Lord is coming so soon.

The second thing he impressed upon us is the necessity of Christians recovering spiritual exercise. Transforming our lives from body, soul, spirit to spirit, soul, body.

I understand that there is not a Chinese version of our brother Kaung’s messages he gave in Richmond on this matter called “The gymnasium of Christ”. What a beautiful book. Such wonderful teaching. In my estimation, it took Watchman Nee’s “The Spiritual Man” to a next level. Communion, intuition, conscience, is the basis of overcoming.

Do you notice that overcoming first comes to light historically in 1 John? The word “overcome”.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4

How big is the Christ within you? That is the question.

Paul was praying that the Holy Spirit would strengthen us in the inner man so that Christ would dwell in our hearts, and this is the victory that overcomes the world.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.

1 John 5:4

Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:5

Abide, abide, abide. Exercise, exercise, exercise.

Our brother Godwin once spoke of a day where people were so covetous to keep their spirits alive to the Lord that the littlest things they would ask forgiveness for, in order to keep their spirits, soul and body under the blood of the Lamb.

And as a church it is so hard not to emphasize outward things, but how necessary for us to be realigned by regular exercise and seeking communion with the Lord, gaining intuitive insights, keeping our conscience clear.

Because John had learned 2 things over the years of this indwelling Christ: it is the power of the indwelling Christ that transforms us from glory to glory; and secondly, what you learn is here is the great mystery: when you abide in Christ and Christ abides in you, you will see that you are holding fast to Him. This is the promise of the better covenant, brothers and sisters. Don't get in a sweat and think "I got to hold fast! I got to get my grip!". And you meet Christ within, and He says, "I got hold of you. And you got hold of me."

In this present day with the rise of Generation Z, I am most concerned because of their way of life, and their virtual reality life, that they don't have this inner core of Christ within that gives them a sense of worth, personality, overcoming, handling problems. This generation does not receive the word that parents used to give: "you can do anything. You can be anything. There is no limit to you." They don't receive that anymore. They know it is not true. So they don't know who they are inside.

When I see or hear of a Christian teenager who has committed suicide, I am so deeply grieved that their church never introduced them to "Christ in you, the hope of glory". Their striving of the outward man has worn them out and they don't know the resurrection life within.

So John wants us to know the One within. So he says, "whatever level you are at, get to know him more". He says, "little children, what have you discovered? He is your Abba. Get to know Abba. He has forgiven your sins. Can you say 'Abba', do you know Abba, do you pray 'Abba I need help?'" If you do, you'll become a young man. The Word of Christ will abide in you and you will find yourself overcoming the evil one.

So if you are a young man. Lay hold of that Word within you. Exercise that spiritual life, and you will become a father. And who is a father? "I know Him who was from the beginning. I know His eternal purpose. I know how things are going to work out."

You can talk to me about all the neo-Calvinism about predestination, but it is in Christ in you that you discover the revelation: who can separate me from the love of Christ? It has been predestined that I go from calling to justification to sanctification to glorification. It is that you discover it there.

Dear John loved the Lord so much. There in exile he still had fellowship with the Father and the Son. He could say what he remembered Jesus saying: "I am alone but I am never alone."

My dear brothers and sisters, my time is up. But I hope we can see this matter of holding fast is a matter that can be recovered when Christ is restored. Like most of the churches in Revelation, repent, so that Christ can be the center of the church again. And for all of us carnal Christians, let Christ be your life within. And right now in our midst, the Lord is recovering these things.

For this we thank you dear Lord. How you want to show your glory. How you want to prevail in our inner man. Recover your church. Recover your people. That we may overcome in these last days. As Christ holds fast to us, and as we hold fast to Him. Let this be our testimony of Jesus. Thank God He has laid hold of me. Once I was blind but now I see! Jesus has laid His hand on me! Glory glory glory. We bless you, Lamb of God, Amen.