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WILLIAMSVILLE STUDY WEEKEND - AUGUST 1994

CHRIST IN YOU - THE HOPE OF GLORY

Speaker: Bro. John Ullman

Study #4

The Garland Of Righteousness

Reading: 2 Timothy 4:1-8

In our final study for today, we're going to consider, just a mere three verses in the apostle Paul's last inspired letter, and that is, of course, his second epistle to Timothy. We come to Paul at the end of a busy and vigorous life in the truth, in which he has manifested very clearly, as seen in his writings, the principles of those things that have occupied our attention, in our studies during the course of today. Paul, a wonderful example, a great man of faith and a great man of faithfulness, who considered not himself, but loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and all his soul, and all his might. And from the time of his conversion to the truth, became a totally dedicated servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. But now his life has come to an end, we believe that the second epistle of Paul to Timothy, was written only a very short time before Paul's death. And he knew that death was near at hand, that is why he says as he does in verse 6, 'For I am now ready to be offered', we're going to look at those words and see what their significance is.

Paul in writing to Timothy, as he had in the first two or three chapters, is encouraging Timothy to take up the work and to carry on with those things that needed to be done. And that, of course, is as it should be, because throughout the history of the truth, faithful brethren have endeavoured to find younger faithful brethren of the next generation, to take up the torch, to hold it aloft, and to carry on without fear or favour, the proclamation and defence of the one true faith. So that in chapter 2 and verse 1, Paul has said to Timothy, 'Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also'. That was the way the truth would survive. And that is the way in which the truth will continue to survive, until the Lord comes. What we need, of course, and what we look for today, is a faithful younger generation, who will heed this exhortation, and who'll gain sufficient knowledge and understanding and depth of wisdom in the things of God and the Word of God, to be able to fulfill that commission. Paul in the 13th verse of the first chapter said to Timothy, 'Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in

faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.' And there is the challenge to the next generation! 'Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me', and that brings to mind the comment that we made earlier today, that the truth is not something to be trifled with; it is not something to be played around with; it is not something to be experimented with; it is there; it has been rediscovered in the latter days; it has been brought to the light of day. If we want to know more about the truth, read and study Elpis Israel, read and study Eureka, read and study the Law of Moses, read and study Phanerosis; those sound, faithful works that have stood the test of time, and which represent to us the elements of the faith, which we have espoused, and which we have accepted through the act of baptism, and our commitment to serve Christ, until our life is finished, as it was in the case of the apostle Paul, or until the Lord should come.

And so in verse 6 of second of Timothy chapter 4, Paul says to Timothy, 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand'. Now, he means something far more here, than appears on the surface. I am now ready to be offered, the word should be literally rendered, I am now ready to be "poured out". In actual fact, I think that we might see in a little while, from some further nights that I've got, that I'm being poured out, (but nevertheless, we'll come to that in a moment). Let's look at it from this point of view for a start, 'I am now ready to be offered' should be understood as, 'to be poured out'. Now, the thing is, what is he talking about? Well, we know that the Lord 'poured out His life unto the death', so there's an allusion there, to the imitation in Paul of the sacrifice of Christ. Although we believe there is something more than that in this expression. We believe that when Paul says 'I am now ready to be poured out' that there is a clear allusion there to the drink offering under the Law. You see, the drink offering was always an ancillary offering and was never anything else. And that is not to diminish the significance of the offering. It was in fact, a very vital part of the offerings, but it was an ancillary offering, in other words, it accompanied the main offering. Now, why would Paul use a term like that? I think that at the end of his life, he would use a term like that, because he would be looking upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme great sacrifice that was 'poured out', and he would regard himself as an ancillary to the work of Christ and the mission that was accomplished in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Numbers chapter 15 and at verse 10 it states, 'And thou shalt bring for a drink offering, half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh'; now there is the wine that represents the blood. There is the link with the sacrifice of Christ, and there it is in the mind of the apostle Paul. Now in view of the fact, that the drink offering was offered together with the burnt offering, which, of course, was the offering of dedication; it represented a life dedicated in service to God. In view of the fact, that the drink offering was offered with the burnt offering, we can quite correctly take it, that Paul was in the process of offering his life upon the altar of fire, so to speak, in the pouring out of his life in service to his God and to his King. So the whole expression is to be understood in that way. Paul, is here, offering himself. There are those that say, that it is literally to be rendered 'I am already being poured out', and the time of my dissolution has come near'. You'll notice that our King James Version renders it, 'my departure is at hand', and of course, the immortal soulists understand

that as meaning, that he's going to 'throw off this mortal coil and his soul will leave the body and depart, and be with the Lord, but that's not what the word means; it means 'dissolution', in other words, he knew that with death his body would dissolve into the dust of the earth. That he would sleep, perhaps a long sleep until the Lord came to raise him out of that sleep, that he might stand upon his feet once again, in the presence of his Lord and Master. It needs also to be remembered, brethren and sisters, in the light of Paul's words here, 'I am now ready to be offered, or I am already being poured out', in other words, his life was already a sacrifice to God. It needs to be borne in mind, that the drink offering was poured out on the fire of the altar of burnt offerings. And fire symbolizes 'trial' and fire symbolizes 'divine judgment or acceptance'. You see, when that burnt offering was offered upon the altar, and you'll find this in Exodus chapter 29, and we particularly had in mind, verse 41, but you'll find in Exodus 29 that that burnt offering, if it was acceptable to Almighty God, was consumed by fire, and the whole of the offering ascended as a sweet smelling savour to Almighty God. Now, this is the language which Paul uses in the second of Timothy chapter 4 and at verse 6. And, do you know, there were six altar offerings under the Law, and the drink offering formed a part of them, and so far as the burnt offerings and the peace offerings were concerned, in particular, both the drink offering and the meal offering formed a part of those offerings. And these represented that which God required of man, a moral requirement that man's profession of service to Him, was to be matched by practical action, and that, of course, was seen in the meal offering, because the man had to mix up the meal offering. He had to make it; he had to prepare it, and so therefore, it represented the work and the labour of his hands. As the drink offering represented the 'poured out blood' in the sense that a sacrifice was also slain, and its blood poured out. That represented a life poured out in sacrifice to God, but the meal offering that went with it, represented the work and the labour and the effort of a man's life. So that again, we come back to the point, that in this basic theme, CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY, our life and our service in the truth, is intensely practical, so there must be a moral requirement that God has, that's got to be acknowledged and answered. So therefore, God requires that a man's profession of service to Him, must be matched by practical action. And that's got to be displayed in the things that we perform as a result of the faith that we have espoused. And of course, in the 'pouring out of our lives' upon the 'fire of the Christ-altar'; the altar of self sacrifice. And as we have already seen the word 'departure' means 'dissolution' and it really, I believe, relates also to the burnt offering, in that the burnt offering was totally consumed by fire, so it represents, this word 'dissolution' represents the end of mortal service. Paul has now come to the end of his mortal life, and therefore, has come to the end of his mortal service to Christ. That doesn't mean that he's come to the end of his service, because he has to be raised to receive his reward, to pass into the kingdom and to live and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God. And he knew that as we shall see in verse 8; he knew that that reward awaited him.

So he now says some very interesting things. In verse 6, 'For I am now being poured out and the time of my dissolution is at hand' (the end of my mortal life and my mortal ministry for the Son of God. I will be no more, says the apostle, until the Lord comes to raise me out of the slumber of death). Now, in verse 7 he says, 'I have fought a good

fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith'. Now, what does he mean here? Well, the word 'fight' is a word that primarily refers to 'the place where the games, the Olympic games were celebrated'. Now, you're probably aware of the fact, that the Olympic games that are so famous since they've been renewed after the second World War, and are probably more popular and more famous now, than they ever have been, that they actually date back several hundred years prior to the time of Christ. It's one reason why Paul particularly in his writings, makes so many allusions to them. So therefore, we find that in verse 7, the twentieth century New Testament translation of the bible, renders it in this way. 'I have run the great race; I have completed the course; I have preserved the faith', and that is exactly what those words mean. I have run the great race; I have completed the course; I have preserved the faith. You see, he's using the analogy here of the athlete, so we've gone from the altar of burnt offering now, to the scene of the Olympic games, and the striving for the mastery to win the race of a lifetime. And the athlete had a clearly defined course, which he was required to run. It had been very clearly marked out for him, and you know, that course is never changed. The course that the apostle Paul was required to run, is no different from the course that we are required to run. And you might say immediately, 'Well, that certainly is not right, because we're not required to do what the apostle Paul had to do, and we're not bearing the responsibilities that the Lord Jesus Christ placed upon Paul and sent him forth as an apostle to the Gentiles'. That's quite right; there's no dispute about that whatever, but in the basic principles, and what is meant when Paul said to the Colossians, 'CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY', nothing has changed. From the days of Abel, to the days of Abraham, to the days of David, to the days of the great prophets, although certain principles of divine worship and law have altered throughout the ages, in accordance with the circumstances that God has found wise to associate certain things with, but basically, what has changed? What does God require of us, that is different to what He required of Paul? And we don't alleviate that responsibility by saying, 'Well, I'm no apostle Paul! We all know that; no one's an apostle Paul, and no one ever will be, but we'll not know the apostle Paul until he's raised from the dead at the coming of Christ. But you see, the race for life has always been upon that principle. What has God done?; He has set forth as with the athlete, a clearly defined course, by which eternal life may be gained. And the athlete, in the symbology of the athlete, must run that race according to the rules. And it is God who determines the rules and sets them down; so that's what we mean by saying that 'nothing has changed'. So therefore, in preparing for Christ's coming, we are required to run the same race, over exactly the same course, so far as the principles of salvation are concerned. And what that course means is, developing Christ within us and putting the flesh to death. And that's what it means, and that's exactly what Paul did. We're not trying to equate ourselves with a special commission that the Lord gave to Paul; that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about the way to eternal life; and nothing has changed. So how vital it is then, that we understand that at the judgment seat of Christ, we must be placed by the Lord in the same category as the faithful worthies of old, if we are to share the eternal inheritance with them and others of like mind and like disposition? And that point is further emphasized in the words, 'I have kept the faith'; there you see, if you start thinking to yourself, 'well, if what Bro. Ullman says is right here, I can forget it'. Because look at the worthies of old; Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and on you go down

through history. Hebrews 11, the whole list that is given there, and say to yourself, 'Well, I just don't fit in with any of those, so therefore, I might as well forget it'. Look, you give a thought to all those who are not named in Hebrews 11? You give a thought to all those who appear in scripture fleetingly and then, pass off the scene, and we hear nothing more of them. In many cases their names aren't even mentioned. We don't even know who they are. Do you know who one of my favourite characters in scripture is? God willing, I'd love to meet him and I hope that I do in the age to come? That man was Jonathan's armour bearer. It's one of my favourite stories in scripture, and you know, when my children were little, and it was one of their favourite stories too, when we used to sit around the kitchen table after supper at night, we'd do a bible reading or something; often my children would say to me, 'Dad tell us again the story of Jonathan and his armour bearer'. And I would enact it all out in the kitchen you see, and I'd be climbing up Mount Michmash, Jonathan and his armour bearer and we'd be dancing around the kitchen with swords flourishing and there's be dead Philistines from one wall of the kitchen to the other. They'd be piled up everywhere. The kids used to think it was marvellous. And of course, it was! But you see, remember the circumstances of that, and remember that Jonathan went past the foot of Mt. Michmash which had an acre of ground on the top of it. There was a big encampment of Philistines on the top of Mt. Michmash, and they held the pass that guarded the control of the Land of Israel at that time in that southern region. And Jonathan is seething with anger at the fact that the Philistines are able to ridicule the nation of Israel, to the extent to which they had. And remember, he said to his armourbearer, 'If they say to us, come on up, you Jews, you Hebrews, and come up here and see us', we'll see that as a sign from God and we'll go'. Jonathan's armourbearer, who was there said, 'Alright, O.K.'. Then down comes a voice from up on top of the mountain, 'Come on up here, you Hebrews, now, come up here and see us'. Jonathan looks at his armourbearer and says, 'That's it'; and his armourbearer says, 'Yes, that's the sign'; so up they go! And then there are dead Philistines slaughtered right across the whole top of that mountain by two men. Now, we don't know who that man was; his name is not mentioned in scripture. But, what an incredible man of faith; so do not let us say, 'Well, seeing we're not able to compare ourselves with the greatest of faith of men such as Abel, and Noah, and Abraham and so forth, as we mentioned early, think of all the men that are not mentioned in scripture', and not only that, think of all the faithful brethren and sisters, who have lived since the day when the scriptures were completed, over the last 2,000 years! Think of all those who have never had great positions in ecclesial life, or have never been prominent in ecclesial affairs, but have been faithful to Christ. And that is all that matters! That's all that counts. We don't have to be spectacular; we don't have to accomplish great heights, and climb great mountains. And you see, it's all embodied there in verse 7, when Paul says, in these simple words, 'I have kept the faith', and that's something that everyone of us can do. That is not beyond anyone in this hall today. It's not beyond any of us; that's all we've got to worry about; that's our concern. He says, 'I have kept the faith', and the word 'kept' there is the word 'tereo' (Strong's-5083) and in apostolic times it was a military term and it meant 'to guard'; not just to 'keep' but it meant to 'guard' like a soldier of that nature, and he's 'watching over' that which he is in charge of, or responsible for. So, this is something that Paul had done in a positive and dedicated manner, as a true soldier of Christ.

And you know, there's a bit of an allusion there in chapter 4 back to chapter 2, and at verse 3, when he had said to Timothy, 'Now therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ', the words literally should be rendered, 'endures hardness with me'. In other words, he didn't ask of Timothy anything that he had not been prepared to do himself. So he says, 'endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ', and then adds 'that no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier'. Now, he comes back to that same military language, so now, we have gone in these few verses, we've gone from the picture of the altar of burnt offering in verse 6, to the athlete, and now we come to the soldier, the language of the soldier. So, as far as Paul was concerned, as a true soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter what pressures had been brought upon him, from within or without, he firmly and consistently resisted all attempts or influences that could have drawn him away from total devotion to the cause of Christ. Didn't matter what it was; we know Paul's life because it's revealed in the Word of God. Despite every form of spiritual warfare to which he had been subjected, the dangers, the trials, the sorrows, the tragedies that he had known and experienced and seen. And despite all those things, he had kept and guarded the faith. And he'll be found in that condition at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we pray that we all will be. He was like one who guarded a fortress, and he wasn't going to stand by and see the truth corrupted, or the truth undermined, or the truth destroyed. So, in this context, the use of this word reveals Paul's courage, his determination, his firmness and his zeal, for the things of Christ. THAT WAS THE APOSTLE PAUL!

So what a wonderful and humbling example he was to us all, of the principle CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY! And do you think for one moment, that he would have written those words to the Colossians, like a superior officer over them and telling them what they ought to do? Remember the Lord's warning against the Pharisees? He said, 'You do what they tell you to do, but, don't do what they do', because they say and do not', and whatever Paul wrote to the Colossians, when he said, 'Our hope for you is, CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY, we wouldn't think for one moment would we, that they hadn't been a motivating force in his own life? Of course, it was! So, Paul had never drawn back from the responsibilities that the truth had placed upon him, but he had very forthrightly and very valiantly, risen to the challenges of life, and he always kept Christ, and his duty to Christ, before him at all times. We know that he had refused to compromise that faith, for either Jew or Gentile, and we know that he had especially rejected the philosophy of those brethren who would have made concessions to those who would have weakened or watered down the faith. And the Judaizing element, (just simply take your mind back to Acts 15 and the Jerusalem conference, when Paul caused that matter to be brought to a head, as to whether it was or was not necessary, that Gentiles coming into the truth, should be circumcised and have to keep the Law of Moses). And he knew that it was wrong, and the matter was taken up to the apostles at Jerusalem and a decision had to be given on the matter, and the Judaizers' mouths had to be shut. Because, if they hadn't, by the time that you would have got to Acts chapter 15, the truth would have been finished before it even really got firmly established. PAUL KNEW THAT AND HE FOUGHT FOR THAT AND HE WORKED

FOR THAT, and he persevered in things that were right.

And you think for a moment of Timothy reading these words 'for I'm now ready to be poured out and the time of my dissolution is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith', and you know, Timothy may well have received this epistle after Paul's death, because there were no special delivery air mails in those days. But, whether it be so or whether it be not, we can readily imagine Timothy reading these words. Reading them slowly and carefully, and then reading them again and again and again, as he got this very last letter from his beloved apostle Paul, and reading these words tearfully, as he thought not only on the matter of the death of his beloved Paul, but of that man's outstanding life in the truth. And how Timothy would have been aware of the fact, that there was a strong exhortation in these words for himself, as now today, there is for us. That both Timothy and ourselves must acknowledge and imitate the great faithfulness of the apostle Paul. We know that our great mentor, our great example, is the perfect character of the Son of God, because it is Christ that is going to be formed in us, not the apostle Paul, but that doesn't alter or obviate the fact that Paul as such, was an incredible example for those who desire to 'run the race', the great race for life. To do so on the basis of CHRIST IN THEM, as their HOPE OF GLORY, at the end of the race. And so Paul makes that clear to us, and aren't they words of incredible calmness?

You know, in the second epistle of Timothy, these very last inspired writings, that no doubt he felt would be copied and circulated around the ecclesial world and so forth, you might think that Paul might write at least somewhere, in this epistle, of the fact that he is really dejected now because death is staring him in the face, and he doesn't really want to die, and will the brethren pray for him? Will Timothy pray for him? Will he get others to pray for him, that perhaps he might not have to die at this point? Maybe his life, could by prayers to the Father, be prolonged for another year or five years or whatever? WE DON'T FIND A WORD OF THAT, in the second of Timothy, not a single word. Paul doesn't write a thing about himself, except these words that we are reading here in these few verses! And they don't really concern Paul; they concern his faith. That's what it's about! Not about Paul; he's not pleading with an attitude of self-pity, 'Why is this happening to me, after all I've done for the Lord Jesus Christ, and the way I've served my God? Why does this happen to me?' As he sat in his cell, awaiting the time when he would be taken forth out of that cell, and no doubt, they forced Paul to bow down on his knees, in the court of the jail, and he would be confronted with the executioner, and he knew that his death would come, by beheading, because that was the death afforded a Roman citizen, in the days of Paul.

And as he writes these words, perhaps only days, certainly only weeks or months at the most, before he was going to meet that end, but we don't find him filled with self-pity and saying, 'Why has God done this to me?' He is perfectly calm and you know, in that regard, he had a wonderful example to follow. Not only the Lord Jesus Christ, what about Stephen, for whose death Paul was in large measure, responsible? And although he will be forgiven for that, because of his blindness at that time, I've a strong feeling, that Paul never, ever really completely rid his mind and his conscience of what

he was responsible for, with Stephen. But Paul stood here as Stephen was being stoned to death, and Stephen in his calmness, saying, 'Lord, forgive them'. You see, Paul had that example there, and he could identify with that, in the same way that we can identify with Paul, because he was one of us in every sense of the term.

Paul was not of divine origin, as if that God was his father! He was in every sense a man, in the same way as we are. We know that the Lord was of our nature, but we do know that the Lord had God as His Father, and He received from His Father, a strength that goes beyond mere human capacity. Despite the fact that Paul says in Hebrews, 'that He had to overcome with strong crying and tears', it was not easy for the Lord Jesus Christ. It was an incredible struggle to live an entire lifetime, and keep this nature totally subdued, that only the will of God might be performed in His life, and that man, Who was the Son of God, could live for 33 ½ years and never once, transgress a divine commandment. Remember, He even said in Matthew 5 and verse 28, He said that, 'whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart'; the Lord never did that, because if He did, He would have been an adulterer. So, He had that charge of His mind as well as His body. And yet He did that! Now, the apostle Paul knew those things, and he was acquainted with those things, and he is a wonderful and humbling example to us all, and he never, ever, drew back from those responsibilities that had been placed upon him.

You can imagine Timothy reading this letter and reading these words, and perhaps when he received the letter, quite likely a note accompanied it saying that Paul died on such and such a date. We don't know, but it may have been that way. Certainly, Timothy would feel fairly confident or sure, that by the time he received this letter, Paul would be dead. And so the apostle says in that language of the athlete, and the allusion to the games, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith', and then he says, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.' So is it any wonder then, that he had total confidence in the promise of the Lord? to the point where he was able to say, 'henceforth there IS LAID UP FOR ME, a crown of righteousness'. The word 'henceforth' should not pass unnoticed. Weymouth translates it 'hereafter there is laid up for me', so do you know what Paul was doing? He was doing exactly what Moses did, he was looking off toward the reward. And we started around about that point earlier today, there was Moses and here is Paul; 'hereafter there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness'. He doesn't write and say, 'Hereafter and very shortly there's to come the executioner, who's going to behead me and my body is going to be laid in the grave, and isn't anyone going to feel sorry for me? He's not thinking about himself, he is thinking about the virility of his faith and the activity of his faith, that he had a living confidence in the things of God. HEREAFTER, indeed, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness.

And perhaps, a little loosely we may say, but capturing the spirit of the phrase, the New English Bible renders it, ' And now, the prize awaits me, the garland of righteousness'. And now the prize awaits me, the garland of righteousness, and the significance of the

word 'henceforth' in our KJV, is simply that in the mind of Paul, his life and probation had virtually ended. The struggle was now drawing very much to a conclusion and very quickly. But, the apostle Paul, rich in faith anticipates the Lord's return and the great prize that would be his, at that time. Not out of an idea of selfishness or an idea of gaining something for himself, in the sense that Christ is going to reward me, and I'm going to have a place of honour and glory in the kingdom of God. What Paul wanted was what every man and woman of faith has wanted, and that is in their HOPE OF GLORY they have wanted to become, perfect manifestations of what the Father is, and what the Son now is. They have not wanted greatness for themselves; they have wanted greatness for God IN THEM. And that must be our attitude toward the truth, and so Paul expresses these thoughts, with a sublime state of mind as he waits, with patience and assurance, for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the word that is rendered 'crown', has been rendered from the Greek word 'stephanos' (Strong's- 4735), which means literally, 'that which surrounds'. It referred to a garland; it was usually made of some flowers or leaves. A woven garland and it was presented to the victor in the games, and it was given publicly as a sign of honour for a distinguished accomplishment. So Paul now reverts to that symbology, and that's what it was given for. It was a public acknowledgement of the striving and the effort, that the athlete had put in to what he had done. And such a crown, of course, in a natural setting, would very soon wither and fall apart. You couldn't keep for very long, a crown or a garland, that was simply woven and made out of leaves. But, Paul uses the term because it was associated with the accomplishment of the athlete, who strove for the prize. But, Paul looked for a crown, a crown of righteousness! Not of leaves; a crown of righteousness, and it's a phrase that indicates that an individual presented with such a garland, is regarded by God as being righteous sufficiently to inherit the kingdom of God. And we're reminded again of the words which occur in Revelation 19 and verse 8, which tell us that the fine linen in which Christ's bride will be arrayed, is described as representing, the righteous acts of the saints, as that phrase should be correctly rendered. So, in other words, we must not simply know righteousness in a theoretical sense; it's got to be practised and it's got to be manifested as a way of life, which is another way of describing God Manifestation.

And you know, it's quite illuminating, that we also read of the crown of glory, in the first of Peter chapter 5 and verse 4, and we also read of the crown of life in James 1 and verse 12 and in Revelation 2 and verse 10. So that the saints, who together with Paul, are going to be acceptable to Christ, because their life has been devoted to developing CHRIST IN THEM as their HOPE OF GLORY, they will be revealed in crowns of righteousness, in crowns of glory and crowns of eternal life. And it was Paul's hope to receive such a reward at the hands of, (notice what he says here), 'the righteous Judge'. Now there is a term, and let us look at it; he says, 'Henceforth, (or hereafter) there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day', and although this term may be correctly understood quite literally, as it stands in the Authorized Version, where we believe the play on words here, in relation to the Olympic games, is still flowing on. Because the term, may be equally and correctly rendered as 'the just Judge', not just simply the righteous Judge. Probably

most of you are aware of the fact, that the words in the Greek for 'just' and 'righteousness' are the same; they're interchangeable. Sometimes it is better rendered 'righteous'; sometimes it is better rendered as 'just', and here it can mean 'the just Judge'. And in the games, the Olympic games, the reference is to the man who is appointed judge at the games, and he is required to be absolutely just in the awarding of crowns to the winners; so the winners had to be those, who had fairly won their crowns, according to the rules of the games. And the analogy is very beautiful, so what a wonderful metaphor Paul gives us here at the end of his life, to represent the perfect justice with which Christ will dispense rewards, to those who have satisfied Him, that they are worthy of such honour. And you know, even the word used here for 'judge' carries the metaphor even further, because the Greek word rendered 'judge' the word 'krites'(Strong's-2923), is the word from which we get our English word 'critic', and in apostolic times, it was the word that was used, not only to define 'a judge', but also 'an umpire'. So you have in effect, Christ represented as 'Judge' and in a sense 'Umpire'; so the whole spectacle that is presented here, is that of the apostle Paul running the race for life, with every fiber of his being, to attain to a state of righteousness before God, with Christ granting to him, after the race is ended on his part, the glory and the crown which is due to the victor. So what joy and gladness, just imagine the delight and the ecstasy that will be experienced by Paul in that day, and not to him only but to all those who will share that victory with him.

And hence, the next point that he makes, characteristically, thinking of others as well as himself, when he says 'and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing', but you know, that phrase there, in the Greek, is in the past tense, and it should be rendered, 'all them also having loved His appearing', and you see the point of it there, the usage of the past tense? 'To all them also having loved His appearing', so really what it's dealing with are those, who like Paul throughout their lives, have loved the Lord's appearing from the time they came into the truth. It is a past tense because it speaks of the development from the beginning of the race until the end of the race. So we've got here the aspects of the characters of those that will share the reward of victory with the apostle Paul. And they will like Paul, during the period of their probation, been dominated by the thought of Christ's second coming, and all that that event means to them, and the need to prepare themselves for that event, CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY, so like Paul, throughout all their spiritual warfare, with all the dedication and purposefulness required to fight the warfare of faith, all those that are going to be gathered together with Paul and accepted at the judgment seat of Christ, will have been effectively governed in their thoughts and their way of life, by a very zealous desire for the appearing of their Lord and King; and for the coming of His kingdom, and for the glory that will be manifested in that day, so that such a disposition, if it rules our lives today, as it ruled that of the apostle Paul and Timothy to whom he wrote, and all the faithful that were left there of that generation, if that disposition dominates our lives, then we will have lived by faith and not by sight. And the reality of the phrase, 'thy kingdom come' is a faith which embodies the hope that motivates the faith of those who would be faithful.

We will find that it is very remarkable to consider, that Paul, with these words, is happy to lay down his life, because he knows that God would not allow his life to be taken,

while there was still a work for him to do. So the very fact that he now faces death, he knows that his race has been run, he has accomplished that which God has sent him to do, he has remained faithful and he has remained dedicated, and he has served Christ with every fiber of his being, and therefore, he is happy to lay down his life, if so it be the will of God, that his work is completed, that he might sleep the long sleep of death, until the coming of the Lord, that he might then be raised to the life that was to come in the kingdom age.

Now, with those thoughts in mind, brethren and sisters, I want to appear to change the subject, but I'm not. I want you to come back with me to the very first Psalm, to Psalm 1, and see how that in the beginning of the book of Psalms, we have words that occur there, that embody everything that we have spoken about today. They embody the faith of Paul, but more than that, they embody, hopefully, the faith of us all, and the way of life of those who are striving to develop the spirit of Christ within them, that it might be their HOPE OF GLORY.

Now, in Psalm 1, there are certain points that are made here, that are very, very beautiful, and very, very illuminating in what they tell us. Psalm 1 is familiar to us all, but let's read the opening verses. 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful', and before we read any further, just let us note and observe, that what we are reading about in verse 1, is a particular kind of disposition. A particular kind of disposition, it is not describing a sinless man; a man that is so strong in faith and in his dedication to God, or woman of the same mind, that they never ever sin or never know weakness of the flesh; he's not saying that! It's describing a disposition. Now, it says 'blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly', they remain separate from those who know not God and despise the things of God, 'nor standeth in the way of sinners', they will not be identified with those who live a life that is dedicated to 'hedonism', or the pleasing of the flesh, rather than God, 'nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful', those who have nothing but contempt for the things of God. The man that will inherit the kingdom with the apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ and all the faithful, will not fall into that category.

Now, have you ever noticed in reading Psalm 1, that the very first things that are stated are all negatives. 'Blessed is the man that walketh not, nor standeth in the way, nor sitteth in the seat'; they're all negatives. Why does David start with negatives and then go on to the positives in verse 2? 'but his delight is in the Law of Yahweh; and in His law doth he meditate day and night' and so on. Why does he do that? Well, I believe there's a principle at stake here, in which the Lord Jesus Christ is the great example, because in Philippians chapter 2, in the Revised Version, and others that more correctly follow the Greek text, we learn there that the Lord Jesus Christ, as a servant of His Father, 'emptied Himself'. He emptied Himself; that is a negative, but He did so that He might fill Himself with the things of Almighty God.

Now, let's give an illustration of what we have here in Psalm 1 and verse 1. Just image if I had here on the podium in front of me, a jug of water. I've got here a jug of water

and I think well, 'I'm not very keen on water, what I would really like to have here right now, is a jug of pure orange juice (and the orange juice is there).' So what do I do? I take the jug and I empty it, exactly as the Lord Jesus Christ did, of every fleshly desire, every fleshly aim and objective, He emptied Himself; He poured out the flesh. Now, when you've done that with your jug, what have you got then? You've got an empty jug! There's nothing in it. So what do you do? You take the orange juice, fill up the jug, and what do you have? You've got a jug of orange juice. Now, you imagine that and apply that to divine principles. You empty yourself of self; you empty yourself of those things that are repulsive to God and are not in accordance with the things of God, then you've got a life that you can fill with the things of God and the word of God, and that is how the Lord Jesus Christ became the WORD MADE FLESH. He could never become the Word Made Flesh in the fullest sense, if there had remained within Him, anything of self desire, self interest and selfishness. That's why we have that in Psalm 1 and verse 1. Get rid out of your lives, if you're going to please God, those things that will retard you in your growth and development of the truth, then maybe O.K. there's a vacuum there that's got to be filled. What do you fill it with? Verse 2, 'His delight is in the Law of Yahweh, and in His law doth he meditate day and night', and here's the point that we want to get to in verse 3, 'He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper'.

Now what do we have here? An incredible thing! Look at verse 3 again, 'he shall be like a tree', now we know that trees are used symbolically in the scriptures for men, the human beings. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; you notice this tree hasn't grown up there just by chance, it's been taken from somewhere else and it's been planted by the rivers of water. What does the 'water' represent? It represents the 'Word of God' and you will find that any tree that is planted by a river, like that, near a river of water, will be a tree that will flourish. There's a great and powerful lesson in that, because what it means is, that God has taken us, as He did the apostle Paul, who was one of the greatest living enemies that the truth had, until he was converted to Christ. And He took the apostle Paul out of his apostate state, and He planted him by the rivers of water, by the water of life, and Paul in a spiritual sense, was able to get his roots down into that water of the Word and soak it up and grow and prosper as a tree, to the glory of God.

You know, many years ago, in our own home where we have lived now for 30 years, we had a lot of problems with the afternoon sun, because our house faces west, and in the summer we have some very, very hot afternoons, and a brother thought he had the answer to our problem. I was talking to him about it one day, and he did a lot of planting and things of that nature, and he said, 'I can fix that for you'. He said, 'I'll put in there a fast growing sugar gum tree. A gum tree, one of the Eucalyptus's, and I'll put it there just in front of your house, and that will fix the problem before you know where you are'. So, he put in a tree there that was round about 5 feet high, and you know, you could sit in our lounge room, our front room, and look out through the window, and watch that tree grow! And the result was that in about four years, that tree had gone from 5 feet to between 40 and 50 feet high. Unbelievable! and then we realized, and

what a time to realize this, but he had planted it right by our well, which is on an underground stream, 50 feet down. And do you know what the tree had done? It had put its roots down, which Eucalyptus do, very quickly and rapidly, they have a very deep tap root; it'll find water anywhere even if it's 50 to 80 feet down, and it put its roots down, and got on that underground stream, and it was soaking up water like it was going out of fashion, and the tree was going up and up and up! So, in the end, I said to this brother, who had put this tree in, only a matter of years before, I said, 'Look, we've got a crisis on our hands'. And he said, 'What are you talking about?' I said, 'Well, that tree you put in outside our lounge room', he said, 'Yes, what about it?' I said, 'Well, here's the position; either the tree goes, or we do', because it was getting underneath the roots of the house and it was going to cause havoc. So anyway, he came down; he chopped it down; got out his chain saw, chopped it all up. You know what happened to that tree? He brought about a 5 ton truck down to complete the job, and when he had chopped it all down and cut it all up, it filled the back of his truck. And this is all in a matter of a few years. Unbelievable!

Well, that's what we're dealing with here in verse 3 of Psalm 1, and can you imagine applying that to the apostle Paul, whose glorious and wonderful example, which we have just been reading about at the time of his death! But you see, we all have to learn to become like that, like a tree that God has taken in His mercy, from the environment in which we have started off. An arid wilderness! and arid spiritual wilderness and He has dug us up from our environment and He has brought us and has planted everyone of us, by the river of His Word of life. And we must grow ! but notice what He says here, 'that tree will bring forth fruit', and that's what a husbandman desires to see. Yahweh is the husbandman. Could you have imagined, when Paul was called to the truth, can you imagine, the brethren who were then baptized and who had gathered around the various areas where the truth had been established, and they heard that Paul had come into the truth? And they would have said, 'What!' 'What, Paul of Tarsus, that great butcher that persecuteth; that wicked man, that man who's persecuted the brethren, thrown them into jail, treated them like dirt under his feet. In the truth? Paul, Saul of Tarsus?' Can you imagine the fear that would have spread, until they had found that he was genuine and true? But, look at the way Paul grew like a tree, whose tap root is down in the water of life, and look what that water of life did to the apostle Paul? And of course, we know that it can do the same for us, but it's more than simply growing up, it must bring forth fruit, because that's what the Husbandman desires to see. And Almighty God knew, when He took that man, with his determination to stamp out the truth and the gospel of Christ; He took that man, and the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and his life was never the same again. He became a tree growing up, growing in stature and producing fruit, for the glory of the Husbandman. But, what kind of fruit? What kind of fruit? You see, normally if you got fruit trees, at home in your back yard, or wherever you live, as we have in our yard, if you don't pick the fruit when it's ripe, it falls off the tree and it rots on the ground. We're not talking about that kind of fruit.

Keep your hand in Psalm 1 just for a moment, and come with me to John chapter 15 and verse 16. The Lord Jesus Christ, on that last night when they left the Upper Room,

and they made their way toward the garden of Gethsemane, He says, speaking to the disciples in the way, as they are going along through the darkness of the night. They'd left the Upper Room, they're walking through the quiet, dark, desolate streets of the city, and He says to them in verse 16, 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain'. This is not a fruit that is going to fall off when it becomes overripe, and fall to the ground and rot. This is a fruit that is going to last forever. You know why? Because it is the fruits of the Spirit. That's why! It is the fruits of godliness developed in a character, like that in the man Paul, and like the faithful worthies of old. And as we have already said this afternoon, (countless numbers of whom we know nothing), they have also developed those fruits in their lives, through drawing up the waters of the Word of God out of the river of life. And so, that is the fruit that is to be produced, but then, back in Psalm 1 and verse 3, here is the end result, 'his leaf also shall not wither' (as the margin renders 'fade'), the same thing. 'His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth, shall prosper', in other words, here is a tree that is going to become an evergreen. Year in, year out, more than that, century in, century out; in other words, an evergreen is pointed to here, through all eternity. So the Father has taken us, as He has with all the faithful throughout the ages; where did He take Abraham from? Ur of the Chaldees. Where has He taken many others from? All over the place and planted them by a river which flows with the water of life, from the Word of God, in which they have put down their roots into that Word and they have grown and produced fruit to the honour and glory of God, because it is the fruit of the Spirit and ultimately, they will be pronounced as a evergreen. They will not lose their leaves; they will not die; they will remain there.

And so in all these things we have seen today, the example that the Lord Jesus Christ has set us. The things we started with, with some of those references in the Apocalypse, that we must hold fast to the things that we have. That we must become filled with the Word of God, that we must indeed, be planted by a river, that we must have the faith and the determination of an apostle Paul, to run that great race, to pour out our lives as a drink offering, together with a burnt offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we might offer our lives to our God. That we might produce fruit, and that ultimately we might become evergreens, never losing our leaves; never dying knowing suffering, disease, death, all the weaknesses and infirmities of the flesh. All of them to be swept aside, and we're to become in the symbolic sense, as glorious trees bearing forth fruit, in the age to come, and together with the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all eternity.

And that has been our theme for the day, that there might be in our lives, those influences of God's Word at work, which will produce CHRIST IN US, THE HOPE OF GLORY!