

"THE BELIEVERS WALL OF DEFENSE"

Proverbs 25:28

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You know as we review our society today we become very aware of the fact that we are in what is often referred to as - one, the post-Christian era, and then two that we are in a battle of values. Living in a world that is no longer and in a society that is no longer predominately or inherently Christian. We find ourselves battling for the very values upon which Christian principles are built.

It is interesting to know that the very heart of that battle is a conflict -- a conflict between the secular view of life and the spiritual view of life. Each one of us here today, we are effected by it in every way that we live everyday. Cause we are constantly surrounded by those kinds of things that represent secularism. While all the time if we are believers and are following the ways of the Lord we are trying to live by those things which are spiritual.

If we take a secular view of life then we say that man is the measure of all things.

If we take a spiritual view of life then we say that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to serve Him forever.

If we take a secular view of life then we say that the government has the capacity to fulfill all of man's needs and what

we need to do is to have more government programs so that we can have a virtual utopia on earth.

But if we take the spiritual view of life we know that there will never be a utopia on earth until that the elements melt with a fervent heat and there is a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

If we take a secular view of life then we live our lives by moral relativism which means that anything goes as long as it is not really encroaching on our neighbors and our friends and those who are around us.

However, if we take a spiritual view of life then we say that there are absolute truths, and those truths are outlined first in the Word as secondly as the Word gives us the Ten Commandments that become the code of living as interpreted by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

If we take the secular view of life then we say that the most important thing is the State and how it relates to a one-world and a new age order that everyone seems to be talking about in government circles.

But if we take a spiritual view of life then we know that there is only one world order and that is the kingdom world. For Luke 17:21 tells us - "The kingdom is within us."

If we take a secular view of life then we try to get God out of everyday affairs. We take Him out of our public schools; we take

Him out of our public libraries; we take Him out of the Boy Scouts, or we try.

But if we are taking a spiritual view of life then we say with the Boy Scouts in their oath -

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout law. To help other people at all times. To keep myself physically strong and alert and morally straight.

You didn't know I knew that did you?

If we take the secular view of life then we find anarchy in our society as we see it right now with confusion everywhere and it is just like Israel was in Judges chapter 17 verse 6. There was no king in Israel in those days and everyone did what was right in his own eyes. There was no absolute; there was no authority; there was nothing to judge behavior by, therefore, everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

But if we take the spiritual view of life then we understand that we have an absolute authority, that authority is the Word of the living God.

So we live our lives then by Psalm 119 verse 47 and we say -

For I delight in your commands for I love them all.

We live our lives by Psalm 119 verse 72 when we say -

For the very words that come out of your mouth
they are more precious to me than thousands of
pieces of gold and silver.

Then we say with First Peter chapter 1 and verse 21 that -

The prophecy that has come was not given
through the will of man but it has come
through holy men as they spoke under the
inspiration and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Then we say with First Peter chapter 1 and verses 24 and 25
that we have been called to do one thing and that is to illustrate
the will of God in all that we say and in all that we do.

Then we come to the understanding of Psalm chapter 19 verses
7 through 11 -

The law of the Lord is perfect converting the
soul, the statutes of the Lord are right
rejoicing the heart. The commandments of the
Lord are pure enlightening the eyes. The fear
of the Lord is clean enduring forever. The
judgements of the Lord are true and altogether
righteous. More to be desired are they than
gold, ye than much gold. And they are sweeter
also than honey and honey in the comb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned and in

the keeping of them there is great reward.

And the point of the day is that we have been called at this hour to stand up and become all that First Timothy chapter 6 verse 12 talks about. It is time for us to fight the good fight of faith. For the answer to our day will not be found in executive orders, will not be found in Congressional legislation, will not be found in agency regulations, will not be found in judicial decrees, will not be found in greater taxation, will not be found in social reforms. It will only be found when we return to Luke 11:21 -

Blessed is that person who hears the Word of the Lord and obeys that Word in everything that he does.

Amen, amen and amen. Let the people of the Lord praise the Lord in this place...

What we have to understand -- the only thing that makes a difference will be the Word of the living God. Where the Word of God is there is moral responsibility. Where the Word of God is there is ethical responsibility. Where the Word of God is there is regard for human life. Where the Word of God is there is a protection for the unborn babe. Where the Word of God is there is a helping hand. Where the Word of God is there is a good neighbor. Where the Word of the living God is there is hard work. Where the Word of the living God there is a fulfillment of the American dream and it doesn't come in mere materialism. It comes in the fullness

of the blessing of knowing we are in relationship to God, to our souls and the world. And in Him we live and in Him we have our being. Hallelujah be to God forever more.....

We begin to understand that then we come to the conclusion of saying - "How? That sounds real good to me. I would like to be able to live that kind of a life, but how can I live that kind of a life that you are talking about when everything is in such terrible confusion?

A man called me the other night and said, "I've been watching the news. All that I see is rape and murder and violence and disaster." He said, "You know -- I am so depressed. Is there anything good in the world anywhere?"

It kind of reminds me of the commentator that I happen to catch on the news one night. And he said - Well, I hate to tell you this folks -- but as I look at the news and prepare to give it to you, it is just one big "Achy Breaky Heart." How many of you remember that Hymn "Achy Breaky Heart"? You won't find it in the hymnal.

JOKE

Heard the story the other day about a Country Western Singer and a Jazz musician. They had been in a big Concert of all kinds of music in a Dictator, under-developed Third World country.

They had committed some kind of crime and had been sentenced to death by the firing squad.

So they were taken out and taken before the firing squad and the firing squad talked first of all to the Country Western man and asked him, "Before that we fire these shots, do you have one last request you would like to have?" He thought for a minute and said "Yes," - I would like to hear six choruses of "Achy Breaky Heart."

The squad leader said, "I think we can arrange that."

They looked at the Jazz musician who was a pure jazz musician and said, "Please shoot me first."

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But how do you handle this achy breaky heart, and how do we handle all of these strange voices and all of this confusion and all of this consternation?

What is the believers wall of defense in all of this? Everything gets confused and we are not sure what is reality and what is not reality.

A lady talked to me said, "Whom can I trust? I can't trust what my husband says. I can't trust what my children say. I can't even trust what my best friends say anymore. Is there any truth in the world anymore?"

Interesting that some 85 to 90% of the people in this country say they believe in God and then some 85% say that it is okay to lie. I don't know how that works together real well.

JOKE

It's kind of like the man that was stopped for speeding and the State Patrolman came up and said, "I need to see your driver's license, your registration card and your insurance card. The man said, "Why? What law have I broken?" He said, "Well, you were speeding." He said, "No, I was not speeding." But the radar shows you were going 67 miles an hour in a 45 mile zone.

He said, "That's impossible. They got into a big argument. Finally, the man said, "Your radar gun must be broken." And it looked like they were really going to get into it.

The wife intervened and said, "Mr. Officer, I apologize for my husband. But he always gets stubborn like this when he is drinking like this. This is what always happens."

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Somebody back there just got it.

Then we come to the Bible and the Bible has tucked away here in the Proverbs, a way to live in the achy breaky heart. A way to handle it when the checks in the mail and we know it is not in the mail. A way to handle it when people have lost their sense of absolutes and all the foundation and the pivotal points that we believed in all of these years seem to be shaking and shifting.

And the Proverbs writer says -

Like a city whose walls are broken down is a
man (or a person) who lacks self-control.

Suddenly we begin to see that the believers wall of defense is
this power that is put inside of us that is called "self-control."

We talk a great deal about the Holy Spirit -- what the Holy
Spirit does and what He is capable of doing. But of all the power
and all the glory and all the magnificence and all the beauty and
all of the instalization of his power in our lives that we talk
about in the power of the Holy Spirit, the bottom line is self-
control. The fruit of the Spirit is - self-control.

And it is interesting that the writer of Proverbs would talk
about this "to be like a city with its walls." Because the walls
of the ancient cities were so important. In the ancient city the
wall determined the defense from those enemies without. The walls
determined the security for those people within. If the wall was
in good shape the city was in good shape. The condition of the
wall showed the condition of the city. The prestige of the city
showed the power of the city, the ability of the city.

The writer of Proverbs likened self-control to the state of
that wall.

I'm wondering about the walls in our owns houses and our own
lives.

That's why Nehemiah cried so profusely in 500 B.C. there about when he was in Babylonian captivity because the walls of Jerusalem had broken down and the city was in disrepair.

When I look at our society today I wonder - where are the walls? I wonder - what has happened to the walls? What has happened to the foundation points? What has taken place in this matter of self-control? What do we really mean when we say - "self-control"? How do I define it to you? And when I use that term what images come up in your mind?

By definitions, self-control is to govern one's own appetites. It is to healthfully regulate our desires and our lower passions. It is to avoid the excess. It is to stay in the bounds. It is to prevent excessive, over-indulgence.

When you begin to look at that you begin to see that that is the problem of our whole society. Why should we even talk about "self-control?"

Why do we have the pandemic of AIDS? Lack of self-control. Why are we having so much problem with alternate lifestyles, homosexuality on the one hand and womanizing on the other? It is a lack of self-control.

Why should we ever talk about wife battering and child abuse? Why should that even be a part of a civilized society that is supposedly been based on Judeo-Christian principles and values?

Why should we even have to see that in our papers? It is a lack of self-control.

Why do we talk about alcoholism and drug abuse and drug addiction? And why is security so important? And many of us when we go to bed at night we turn on an alarm because we know there are people out there with a lack of self-control.

ILLUSTRATION

It is interesting that in New York City, 1944 - fifty years ago -- in New York City proper -- into counting greater New York, which is much larger now. But, there were 150,000 more inhabitants living in New York City in 1944 than there are now.

From 1944 till 1994 what has happened in New York City? In 1944 when kids got out of school at the end of the day, 97% of them went home to two parents - a father and a mother.

In 1994 less than 50% of them will go home to two parents - a father and a mother. Most will come home to a single parent and some will go home to no parents.

In 1944 there were only 40 people that were killed with gun shots. In 1994 there are 40 people killed every fifteen hours in New York with gun shots.

In 1944 there were only a hundred children sent to orphanages because they were homeless. In 1994 thousands are abandoned every

year in trash cans, in public rest rooms, on doorsteps.

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What is the bottom of the well there? The lack of self-control. The walls are broken down. The defense is not there. The security is gone.

What we need in this nation today is a revival of the Holy Spirit that will renew our homes, renew our government, renew our land and make people to know that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father in everything we do. Amen, amen and amen. Hallelujah be to God. Let the people of the Lord praise the Lord. Hallelujah.

It doesn't matter how much religion we say we have. It doesn't matter how much we shout. It doesn't matter how many gifts we possess. It doesn't matter how many good deeds that we do, the real essence of a Christian is when he gets under duress and he finds the fat is in the fire and there is no where to turn, he stands up with the control of the Holy Spirit. And the Christ that is in him or her is the Christ that overcomes every power of the world. Amen, amen and amen. That's the answer to the need. That's the answer to the need.

How does that happen? First Thessalonians 5 and 6 says - "To be alert and self controlled."

Titus 2 and 2 says - "To encourage the young men to be self-controlled."

Titus 2 and 12 says - "That we should say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions and that we should be self-controlled, and live upright and godly lives."

Well - how do we do that?

That brings us over to First Peter chapter 4 because when Peter was writing to the people who were scattered across Asia Minor, he was writing to people who need to understand the meaning of self-control.

Here are people under great duress. Here were people who had lost their homes, people who had lost their investments, people whose friends and loved ones and whose family members had been martyred. They had to flee out of Jerusalem and scattered all over Asia Minor because of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First Peter chapter 1, the first verse - They are called the elect. They are called the scattered, the called, the chosen, the sanctified.

It is interesting that Peter would write to them and say - "The end of all things is near" - in First Peter chapter 4 verse 7 - "therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

When you take chapter 4 and you begin with verse 1 you begin to see a formula that you see is necessary if we are going to live our lives by self-control. He starts out by saying -

Therefore since Christ suffered in His body,
arm yourselves also with the same attitude.

And the first step is we have to arm ourselves with the attitude of Jesus Christ. We behave in ways that reflect our attitudes. We see here the attitude of Christ.

With this same attitude because He who has suffered in His body is done with sin. As a result He does not live the rest of His earthly life for evil human desires but does it for the will of God.

Christ attitude was - I will be a sacrifice for sin. Christ attitude was - I will an atonement for sin. Christ attitude was - I will reveal the will of God.

Then when we begin to arm ourselves with this attitude then we accept this sacrifice for sin. We don't have to suffer as He suffered because He suffered in our place. We set the atonement of our sin. "All things have passed away and behold all things are new."

Then we are given the power to really do the will of God. And what is the will of God? To be like Jesus Christ. That's the will of God for every person. That's the will of God for every individual - "To be like Jesus Christ."

And he says you have to have that attitude to start with.

Now self-control is directly correlated to our attitude.

That's why he says in verse 7 - "Be clear minded and self-controlled."

The way you do that is arm yourself with the attitude of Jesus Christ. Attitude is a mind-set. Attitude is a heart-set. Attitude is a translation of an inward feeling into an outward behavior. Attitude is an intellectualization that governs what we do and how that we do it.

Whoever sits on the throne of that attitude determines what our lifestyles are. And this is no time to straddle the fence. We've got to come to that place where Jesus Christ really becomes Lord of our lives or we will not succeed. But when Jesus Christ is Lord - All things are possible to him who believes." Amen, amen and amen.....

I don't know - I'm kind of getting blessed by this. Let's praise Him one more time.

Arm yourself with the attitude of Jesus Christ.

Some times we ask ourselves the question, "Is it really worth it?" I read some research the other day - some psychiatrists got together - that ought to be an interesting meeting.

JOKE

It's kind of like the two psychics who met on the street. Both of them claimed to be clairvoyant. One said to the other - "You are doing fine, tell me how am I doing?"

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They looked over all the psychiatric research about the efficacy of religion.

A lot of studies have been done between those who have a professed faith in Jesus Christ and have a regular regiment of worship and doing religious things in the church and those who are not. They were amazed.

Over 90% of the studies bore each other out. And those people who had the attitude of Christ, those people who were in relationship with God, those people who engaged in religious worship and religious activities, those people were healthier, those people had better marriages, those people were happier. They were less prone to heart attacks. They were less prone to anxiety attacks. They were less prone to high blood pressure.

Am I helping you all right now?

They healed quicker? From broken bones.

I went in to see the doctor my last check-up and they told me it would take eighteen to twenty months before I would be better and I would be able to use my arm and have full movement in it. Many of you watched me as from that skiing accident I went this way and this way and this way -- you remember I told you the left arm was a Presbyterian arm, the right arm was a Pentecostal arm. No offense to the Presbyterians cause I am a graduate of Presbyterian College and they can take that kind.

I went to the doctor for the last check-up and he said - My goodness it has only been nine months and look at you. It is a testimony to your work and your hard effort.

I said - it is not only a testimony to that, it is a testimony to the healing power of the living God who lives forever.

The research shows that better relationships in the home. That doesn't mean that religious people don't ever divorce or have problems, but happiness at home, greater happiness at home, better ability to handle bad news and go through difficult times because we know one thing and one researcher wrote - in that article - something I'll never forget. He said -

We have learned there is no substitute for and there is nothing that can stop the power of prayer to God.

Amen, amen and amen....

Because we arm ourselves with the attitude of Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Well, let's take it another step if we might.

As a result he does not live the rest of His earthly life for evil, human desires but rather for the will of God.

Now for verse 3 -

For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do.

Now - that is the choice? Do I do what the pagans do, or I do what spiritual people do? Do I do what the secularists do or do I do what spiritual people do?

Living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable idolatry.

Sounds like Saturday night - Hello.

Somebody just woke up and said, "That must be why I have a hangover this morning."

They think it is strange that you do not plunge with them in the same flood of dissipation. And they heap abuse on you because you don't follow their tracks, you don't march to their drum beats, you don't do what they want you to do. Because misery loves company.

But they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead so they might be judged according to men in regard to the body but live according to God in regard to the Spirit.

We are judged by the body but the body does not regulate the body. When we live a carnal life, when we live a lustful life, when we live a sinful life, then the body begins to regulate the body. But when we live for Christ then the Spirit regulates the body and the

deeds that are done in the body bring glory to God for whatever we do in Word or deed we do it unto the Lord through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen, amen and amen. Well, praise Him in this place. Hallelujah be to God.

And verse 7 says then that "you have to be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray."

I was holding revival as you know, down in Covington at the Prospect Methodist Church which is a Spirit-filled church. Mark Rutland went down there and tampered with those people and we had a wonderful time together.

But one night a lady came up to me and said, "Do you remember me?" I said, "Sure - first time I met you, you were a flight attendant and then you came to church and I remember you had a little boy and I met your husband. You were part of our church for a long time till the Holy Spirit moved down here and then you moved down here because you lived near here. They used to drive 130 miles round trip every Sunday to church.

She said - well, here is my seventeen year old, do you remember him?

It all suddenly clicked. When he was two years old and they had just been attending our church for about 3 months he came down with Meningitis. Took him to the hospital and he went into a coma. He was in a coma for nine days. The doctors all said - well, he may live but if he lives we can't guarantee his faculties, his

intelligence factor. He could be a vegetable the rest of his life and he will probably die.

For nine days they were in a vigil. She prayed everyday, the church prayed everyday, many of you people prayed for them. We prayed that God would do a miracle. On the ninth day she went into the hospital day and the little boy had awakened and was only two years old and started to cry.

Suddenly everybody rushed to the scene and low and behold on that very day he was healed, instantaneously, miraculously and he stood there as a big, strapping six foot one, seventeen year old that stood there with all of his faculties and all of his power just in his senior year in high school proclaiming the understanding that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

Be clear-minded; be self-controlled so that
you can pray.

Amen, amen and amen. That's what the book says - "So you can pray."

So we arm ourselves with the attitude of Christ. Say that with me all over the congregation. "Arm yourself with the attitude of Christ."

TAPE TURNS OVER

...We adjust to the world through the actin of Christ. It's one thing to have the attitude inside of us, the other thing is to act in the way that Jesus Christ would act.

It gives us a list here of things we need to do.

We have all grown up with lists have we not? I don't know -- when I was growing up I belonged to certain things -- I remember the Captain Marvel Club. Anybody remember that? I have one or two here who were being honest. The rest of you are looking around, you weren't sure. I had a secret decoder. Mine never would work. They never would refund the money.

But if you go back - some of you might have been members of the Roy Rogers rider club. Was anybody here a member of the Roy Rogers Rider Club? Same guys - were the same members of the Roy Rogers Club. Well, they had a list by which you should live. We don't do that anymore. Everybody "poo poos" this. This is what some of us grew up on. It's a tragedy. The action of Christ is no longer there.

I read the other day about a woman who had been out of teaching school for fifteen years. She had started when she got out of college and taught for about twenty years, retired, stayed out for about fifteen years, then she decided to come back to school to do some substitute teaching because they were in need of substitute teachers.

So she went in the class the first day and for about twenty years she had been a very successful teacher and won a lot of rewards. She opened her class with - "Good morning students," and they would answer back - "Good morning Miss Jones." She thought

that would be a good way to open the class. So she opened the class and said to the class, "Good morning class," and the kid on the front row said, "Shut up you bitch." What does that tell you about how far that we have drifted in our society.

We have forgotten the inner-controls; we have forgotten the meaning of self-control. The Roy Rogers Club used to say this -

Be courteous and polite. Always obey your parents. Protect the weak and help them. Be brave and never take chances. Study hard and learn all you can. Be kind for animals and care for them. Eat all your food and never waste any.

My mother used to say - the people in China are starving. I didn't even know where China was and then I didn't really care. They decided one time that I was anemic so I had to have liver everyday. The consequence of that is - I hate liver. Don't ever serve me liver. Don't even mention the word "liver" to me under any circumstances.

Love God and go to Sunday school regularly.

Always respect our flag and country.

What are you leading up to Pastor? I'm leading up to the fact that God gives a list here. That's why Boy Scouts were so important.

A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

When do I get my merit badge?

Here is his list. Go down the list.

If you want to be self-controlled, you want to be clear-minded, above all - "Love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins." - Number one

Number Two - Offer hospitality with one another without grumbling.

Number Three - Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Number Four - If anyone speaks he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.

Number Five - If anyone serves he should do it with the strength that God provides so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever.

You see the bottom line probably is - we have to learn to adjust. The way that we adjust determines the kinds of lives we have. All behavior is need motivated. We are all motivated to meet our particular needs. We all have physical needs - the need for air - the need for water - the need for activity - the need

for proper temperature - the need for the biological fulfillments of our biological urges. We have those physical needs.

We all have social needs - the need to be - to belong - to do.

We all have spiritual needs, the need for redemption and the need for reconciliation and the need for an ongoing relationship with God.

That's why we have so many weird things -- people trying to do something about the spiritual needs and ways that don't really quite fully satisfy because they never learn the book.

The problem is that we have to delay gratification. You can't have all those needs met immediately and tension sets up. We run into barriers and we have to adjust.

We've been keeping our grandchild - little Ashton - for the last couple of days. We've farmed out Justin to his other grandparents. And we are adjusting a whole lot for the last two or three days.

But the way you adjust is so important. The way you adjust determines your attitudes, your beliefs and your values, your character, your temperament, and your mood, your relationships, your lifestyle and your behavior determines the kind of people that we are. We adjust.

But he says - Here is the way you adjust - to be clear minded and self-controlled, what do you do?

You love each other deeply, you offer hospitality, you use your gifts to serve others, you administer God's grace, you speak the very words of God and you serve God with all of your strength that God will provide and you give praise to God Almighty.

But we are so manipulative. It's so hard for us to really understand that. The result is that we lose our sense of self-control.

One of the people who meant so much to me in my studies through the years has been Hellen Keller.

As you know, she was blind and she was deaf. In the 1920s when she lived it was a time when we didn't have all the devices that are available to us now to treat that.

It was amazing what she was able to do though with her handicaps.

Through Ann Sullivan she came out of the world of darkness and out of the world of silence and discovered a world outside of herself. By the time she was ten years old she had learned to talk. Even though she had these guttural sounds the people said were not pleasing. Yet she gave over 250 presentations during the time she was a teenager.

She stood before the University of Glasgow on one occasion and they gave her a special degree and endowed upon her a doctorate, an

honorary doctorate.

She couldn't see the congregation or the people who had gathered in the audience and she couldn't hear their thunderous applause. But she said, "Neither darkness or silence can impede the progress of the human spirit."

The thing about Helen Keller was that she had the action of Jesus Christ.

And I ran across this the other day. It talks about Helen's spiritual life.

Helen Keller's outstanding physical and moral courage is undergirded by the most valuable strength of all -- her deep belief in Jesus Christ.

Helen categorized her book, My Religion Is A Humble Testimony, one that she hoped would give its readers a sweeter sense of God's presence. To her Jesus was divine love, she explained. She spoke of him as "God in the humanity which He assumed on earth." Through the kindness of Phillips book she discovered at an early age the glories of the Bible. She said that she loved it as she loved no other book. Some pages of her copy showed where her fingers had rubbed off all the dots on her

Braille Bible so that she had to supply from memory many verses. Helen said, "I read the scriptures with an ever brightening sense of joy and inspiration. It gives me a comforting feeling that things seen are intemporal, things unseen are eternal.

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Listen to me now my friends - - we have not unlocked the power that God has given to us in Colossians 1:27 - that it is "Christ in us the hope of glory." He says

The wall of defense that I give to you against the enemy, your power against the outside forces and your security to the inside of your very life. Keep the wall straight so that you will have self-control. Because a city whose walls are broken down is like a man (or a person) without self-control. Be clear-minded and self-controlled so you can pray.

What is that going to take?

Could I admonish you this morning as we would be introspective in our lives -- we look into our very being -- and we ask ourselves, "Am I really what I say I am?" "Am I really what I say I am?" "Am I really the person that I purport to be?"

I have the feeling that all of us would probably come up short

on most of the criteria. But that "God's grace is sufficient. "

The joy that I have as a minister of the gospel is being able to come to people in all kinds of problems and say - "There is grace for you."

But what we need today more than anything else is staying power.

I will face up to what drives me and listen quietly for the call of Christ whose staying power. I will see myself as Christ's steward and not as my own master of my purpose, my role and my identity. I will make a daily determination to see time as God's gift and worthy of careful investment. I will allocate my productive hours to the development of my capabilities, the enlargement of my limits and the effectiveness of my priorities. I will strive to use all I learn in service to others as Christ did. I will regularly choose to enlarge the spiritual center of my life.

I like this seventh one.

I will press Sabbath peace. I will press Sabbath peace into the rush and the routine of my daily life and absorb the words of Christ into my attitudes and actions for self-

controlled arms with the attitude of Christ
and it adjusts with the action of Christ -

To be clear-minded and self-controlled.

Will you bow your heads for prayer?