

“A TIMELESS LOOK AT TEMPORARY TIMES”

II Corinthians 4:16-18 - W95466

Dr. Paul L. Walker

You know it has been said that “we live in the day of self-destruction. Our biologists tell us that we are smothering our plan life to over-proliferation and over-consumption. Our physicists tell us that we are degenerating human life through radio active fall-out and pollution. Our bio-chemists tell us that we are suffering a brain-drain because of drug addiction and inadequate education. The sociologists tell us that the big rip off and greed have become acceptable ways of life. Our psychiatrists are telling us that narcissism and selfishness and phobias are the mental disorders of our day. And our theologians are asking what ever happened to the meaning of sin? What ever happened to those Judeo-Christian values upon which our nation was built?

As a result of that we find people are living today as though they had no tomorrow, as though there were no hope for them beyond this life. All of the major

theories of our day are ones of neologism, that after death there is no life, that the end of all life is at death.

But in that kind of hopelessness, in the midst of that kind of cynicism, in the midst of that kind of doubt and unbelief where man has lost his sense of meaning, his sense of purpose and his sense of significance, the Bible comes crashing through and tells us that there is a better way to live. And it gives to us the true essence of why that God created us in His own image. For Genesis 1:27 tells us that “we are created in the image of God.” Psalm 139 verse 14 tells us that “we are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

We are made for more than just breathing in and breathing out. We have been made for more than just going to work and coming home. We have been made for more than just filling out seventy years and then going into oblivion. We have been made to live eternally in an eternity with God or separated from God.

We made the choice according to how that we live. When the Bible talks about life it talks about it in timeless terms. That is why Paul tells us in Second Corinthians chapter 4 verse 18 that “we should not fix our eyes on those things which are seen or those things which are visible because they are temporary. But

we need to fix our eyes on those things which are unseen or those things which are invisible because they are eternal.”

When the Bible talks about how we should live the timeless life it tells us that in Christ Jesus we can have a place of peace. Romans chapter 5 verse 1 it tells us “Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through Him.”

The Bible tells us that we can live a transformed life, that our lives can be changed from this mundane existence. Second Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 tells us that “everyone of us who is in Christ Jesus is a new creation. For the old things have passed away and behold all things have become new.”

When the Bible talks about life it talks about it in terms of a joyous life. John chapter 16 verse 24 Christ says very emphatically, “Until now you have not ask anything in my name. If you will ask you will receive so that your joy might be full, your joy might be complete.”

When the Bible talks about an eternal or a timeless life it talks about a confident life. First John 5 and 14 it tells us that “we have this confidence according to God that if we ask anything in the name of Jesus Christ that He will hear us.”

We can live a life of confidence.

The Bible tells us that we can live a life of pardon. We don't have to stay in guilt; we don't have to stay in condemnation; we don't have to live a life of separation from God. First John 1 and 9 tells us in no uncertain terms - "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all righteousness.

The point being -- if we are to find the real essence of life we are not going to find it in the coffers of this world. We are not going to find it in the fleshly pursuits that come out of our own ingenuity's. There is only one way to find life and that is to find the giver of life. In John 10 and 10 - Christ said - "I am come that you might have life and you might have it more abundantly." Amen, amen and amen...Well if you believe that this evening praise the Lord in this place. Hallelujah.

He says - "I am come that you might have the life of peace. I have come that you might have the life of transformation. I have come that you might have the life of joy. I have come that you might have the life of confidence. I have come that you might have the life of pardon. I have called you to be a light to a dark and dying world.

When He speaks to the Christian Church today He is saying for us to rise up and make known to the world, there is only way to live and that is in Christ that we live and in Christ that we move and in Christ that we have our being. Amen, amen and amen... He is the life giving force.

The interesting thing is that Paul the Apostle got a hold of this. When you read the Epistles and we look at what Paul had to say to us we get the understanding that He knew what it took to really live life. That in spite of negative circumstances, in spite of dire situations, in spite of adversity, he found that timeless life.

That is why he tells us in Second Corinthians chapter 4 verse 8 through 9 that you have to learn to live that paradoxical life. He says - "You know that we are handicapped on every side, but we are never frustrated. We are puzzled but we are never in despair. We are persecuted but we never have to stand it alone. We are knocked down but we are never knocked out."

In verses 16 thorough 18 he says - "This is the reason that we never collapse - the outward man indeed suffers wear and tear but the inward person receives fresh strength daily. These little troubles that are really so transitory are working out for

us a far more solid reward out of all proportion to our pain.” -- For we have a timeless look at the temporary life because in Jesus Christ we have learned the true meaning of life. Amen, amen and amen...

Well, the reason that so many people struggle today is because we have never really learned to appropriate the Christ-like life.

We know that Colossians 1:27 says that “Christ is in us the hope of glory.” And it as though that we walk around with this reservoir of Christ-like power. When we talk about faith, faith is not something outside of ourselves, faith is the release of the spiritual power that we have in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That power in us is greater than any power in the world. Therefore, constantly we are the victors. Well praise God...

If the Church could rise up and really understand that because we are called upon to make that reservoir of power really known. We say to ourselves, “You know is that really a possibility? Or, is that just a facsimile? Is that just some kind of a copy? Do we just live in the shadow of things or is that the reality of things? There is so much cynicism in the world today that would doubt the efficacy of Jesus Christ, to give us the power to really live the overcoming life. God is not happy

with Christians being depressed. God is not happy with Christians being worried. God is not happy with Christians living in fear and anxiety.

God is not happy with Christians living beneath their inheritance. He said - “I have given you the power in the inheritance of the covenant that you have power over all the things of this world because in Jesus Christ there is the eternal power because He is the eternal One.”

He gives us that kind of power this evening.

JOKE

But you know so often we get caught up in the counterfeits. I heard the story told of a man who was caught speeding and was in one of those kind of speed traps where they just took the picture of his car and they just put down the speed that the radar gave. He didn't even know that he had been caught. Sent the bill to his house and told him the amount of money that would be paid. He took a look at it and thought for a little while and then he took that facsimile, that copy of the ticket and he put it in an envelope. And along with it he put another copy and he put a copy of a \$100 dollar bill and sent it in.

##

We live in the day of copies.

Sometimes we think - this is nothing more than hot air. And for some people they just can't break through the cynical idea that there is such a thing that mankind is an eternal being. Because you see this flesh has been bound by the fallout of the fall. We are caught in the statistical probabilities of this age. We are caught in the human limitation of this age. We are caught in the problem of evil of this age. Therefore, we have to learn - we don't live by the outward life, we live by the inward life because inside of us there is that eternal spirit that belongs to God. When this earthly body is dissolved and this old tent is gone that eternal spirit lives forever with Him.

But you know there are so many people that live in bad weather. They just can't seem to get out of the bad weather.

ILLUSTRATION

I was reading an article the other day and it was talking about - why there is so much bad weather in Buffalo, New York.

My brother used to live in Buffalo. He used to work there several years ago. One year they had so much snow they just shoveled it up and put it in box cars and sent it south so that it would melt on the way back.

The question was asked, Why is Buffalo have so much bad weather?

Well I heard one commentator said - It is because all that cold air coming down out of Canada meets all the hot air coming out of Washington DC and it collides at Buffalo and creates all of that bad weather.

###

Well there is a lot of hot air today and there are a lot of people trying to figure out how to solve our problems. But you don't solve the basic problem of mankind with a "Contract with America," you don't solve it with a veto pen, and you don't solve it in a White House, or a Governor's mansion, you don't solve it in a law book, you solve it when mankind finds out who he is -- that he belongs to God and anything less than that is not acceptable to God. Amen, amen and amen ...
Hallelujah be to God.

So when Paul wrote to the Corinthians he said - Look, you have got to learn how to take a timeless look at temporary life because temporary life will soon be

gone. You have got to set your eyes on those things which are invisible because they are the things which are timeless.

But then we ask ourselves the question, how can we do that?

I began to surmise about this and it came to my mind, you know - this was the whole meaning of the early Church. This was the reason that God brought the Church into existence. This is the fundamental preface of this organism of born-again believers called "The Church" -- to give the world the understanding of the timeless look at temporary life.

And the dynamic that the Apostle Paul had would give him the power to live in our text and the way that our text talks came out of that power of the early Church. It was the foundation upon which he built his ministry.

When Christ had called him to take the gospel to the gentiles he took the Apostles teaching because he became Apostle and an Apostle even though it was out of season, and even though he was not on earth to see Christ personally after His resurrection, yet he had a meeting with him on the road to Damascus and the vision of Jesus Christ gave to Him the commission and call to take this gospel to all the world.

ecclesea, those who are called out of the world into fellowship with Christ. That is why the Church is called the koinonia, the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. That is why the Church is called the laos, the people of God. That is why the Church is called the Liturgea, those who do the work of the people of God. That is why the Church is called the meseo, those who are sent into the world to proclaim - Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

When we talk about the Church we have got to broaden it because we have got to see and understand that the Church is vigorous and it is alive in the world today. It is made up of millions of believers who have been called out of the world into fellowship with Christ who have become the people of God to do the work of the people of God in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, to go into the world and proclaim to the world there is a better day because the kingdom is going to be a literal reality and Jesus Christ shall reign. Hallelujah...

ILLUSTRATION

When we have to understand that the Church is moving forward - everyday there are 174,000 people being won to Jesus Christ. Every year there are over

So we have got to go back and find that dynamic. If we can find that dynamic then we take a timeless look at temporary life.

In Acts chapter 5 verse 42 we get a look at what that timeless life is all about. We can hear it being said in Acts chapter 5 verse 42 - “And daily in the temple and in every house they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

In that early Church power we begin to see the very essence of what it means to live the timeless life. So often in our churches we get caught up in the organization, we get caught up in the institution that we forget that God does not make the program, we make the programs, God does not build programs, we build programs. God is building people. And people make up churches. When people get a timeless look at a temporary life then this world is going to take notice that there is something greater here than what I know about and that greater power is the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Amen, amen and amen....Well praise Him in this place.

Well what did this early Church have?

First of all we notice that they had a time priority. It starts out in this little text that if you are to have a timeless life you have got to have a time priority. It tells us “daily, everyday”- these people didn’t just live their lives for Sunday, they

just didn't live their lives for Wednesday evening, their time priority was that twenty-four hours a day the highest calling in their lives was to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. To be a disciple is the higher calling of my being in the ministry. To be a disciple is a higher calling than my being a pastor. To be a disciple is a higher calling than my being a Ph.D.

To be a disciple is a higher calling than your career. It is a higher calling than your position. It is a higher calling than your place in the home.

The highest calling today is when we truly give our lives to Christ and we follow Him in obedience and commitment and say - "There is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved because He is the way, the truth and the life. And, we come to God through Him."

That time priority. Hallelujah.

You know God created us to have fellowship with Him. The reason that we were brought into being, the reason for the great, creative acts was so that He could walk with us. How it grieved the heart of God in the garden of Eden when He came through to walk with Adam and Eve and they hid from Him. In the cool of the day - the evening time - that beautiful time of day when He would have had fellowship

with them, they hid from Him because of their guilt and their remorse because of sin.”

What God is wanting to do is have fellowship. The only way He can have fellowship is through people who take the time to have fellowship with Him. “If we don’t have the time to praise Him then God is going to raise up people to praise Him. And if He doesn’t raise up the people to praise Him even the rocks are going to cry out that ‘Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.’” That’s the highest calling of man. That time priority.

That’s why Deuteronomy 6 and 5 says - “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, your soul and your mind and your strength.”

That’s why Psalm 109 and verse 2 says - “Blessed is that person who keeps the statutes of the Lord and speaks for Him with all of His heart. It’s that kind of commitment, that time priority.

That’s why Proverbs 3:5 says - “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not on thine own understanding, in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He will direct thy paths.”

That's why Paul the Apostle got a hold of Romans chapter 12 and he said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren - by the mercies of God that you present your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing that you might prove what is that good, and perfect and enlightened will of the eternal God." Amen, amen and amen...

Why do our lives get out of sync and why do we get all fouled up and why do people get themselves all crossed up in their homes and in their relationships? Is it because we have forgotten that time priority.

ILLUSTRATION

Not long ago a couple right here at North came up to me after one of our eleven o'clock services, or our ten thirty services here - - came up to me and shook hands with me and said - "This is the greatest day of our life." I noticed that there was a new beam on their face; there was a new sense of joy that seemed to emanate from them and it really did my heart good because I knew they had been on the verge of divorce. I had talked to them and knew that their family was being torn

apart. I had talked with them and prayed with them that God would do a work in their lives.

Now about three months later they say - "This is the greatest day of our lives."

I said - "Why is that?" They said, "Finally we have reordered our priorities and we have given God first place in our home. He demands and we give to Him the same amount of time we would give to anyone else. We come to Him together. By coming to Him together we have come together one with another and it is like we are living in a transformed house because our time priority has been given to God."

Anybody know what I'm talking about?

###

Businessmen run out of gas and housewives run out of patience and we find ourselves flapping in the breeze trying to make things work and we get on the freeway and we lose our tempers and we know we have to hurry up and wait on every corner and it causes us to have stress, it causes us to have ulcers, it causes us to have to live on all kinds of PeptoBismals, if you please.

We find ourselves in that kind of condition, and why is that? Because we failed to see -- when you walk in the company of our Lord, our God, then when you get into any tough place, His presence is there because “daily and in the temple and in every house we teach and preach Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.” Well hallelujah. So it takes the time priority.

If I’m going to live a timeless life then it means that I have to have a temple partnership.

“Daily and in the temple and in every house they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

When I talk about a temple partnership, these disciples who lived this timeless life, they went to church. They taught daily in the temple and in every house.

In the temple area they would get together and they would sing the Psalms - Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts with the ears of the Lord. They would give their testimonies and they would talk about a resurrected Christ.

The people would gather around - some to heckle and some to listen. But the closer they got the more the convicting power of the Holy Spirit came upon them.

And - daily - what did they do? They began to teach the Apostles' Doctrine - and breaking of bread and fellowship from house to house and the Lord performed many great miracles and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Does anybody know about what I'm talking about here? I'm talking about a temple participation that - it is important that we understand the work of the Church today because we cannot live the timeless life apart from the body of believers and really be as efficient as God would have us to do.

There are those that would tell us that religion is dead. There are those that would tell us that the organized Church is no longer valid. There are those that would say that we don't need to have institutionalized religion. But I want you to know that the day the church bells quit ringing in this country, the day the church steeples come down, the day that the parking lots are not filled with cars of people coming to church, that's the day that God writes "Icabor" across this country and the judgment God will come and that's the day when we are going to go home to be

with Him and we shall see Him and be like Him as He is. Amen, amen and amen.

Hallelujah be to God. Praise Him in this place.

That's why we have a Church - it is a temple participation.

A church is made up of a body of believers and that body of believers is to come together.

When you look at Ephesians it tell us what that is all about. In Ephesians 1 the Church is the body of Christ. Ephesians 2 tells us that the Church is the temple of Christ. Ephesians 3 tells us that the Church is the revelation of Christ. Ephesians 4 tells us that the Church is the new humanity of Christ. In Ephesians 5 the Church is the bride of Christ. In Ephesians 6 the Church is the army of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you look at the Church today you have got to see the militancy of the Lord Jesus Christ because He is the Lord of the Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it because we have the keys to the kingdom. Amen, amen and amen....

When we begin to understand that then we see that it is a temple partnership. Christ has no eyes but our eyes; He has no hands but our hands; He has no feet but our feet. That is why He has the Church. That is why the Church is called the

44,000 new churches being planted. And what we understand as we look across the world -

TAPE IS TURNED OVER

...Europe - there is a revival shaking Africa, there is a revival shaking China, there is a need for a revival in America. And we believe that that revival is eminent. It is in the hearts of the Church and the Church is going to rise up and we are going to see the greatest outpouring of the Spirit of God that we have ever known in the history of mankind. Amen, amen and amen....Hallelujah be to God.

I'm talking about a temple partnership because we have been called into partnership with the Lord and that partnership comes through the Church.

You know it is interesting when you begin to see people really make that partnership.

ILLUSTRATION

A few years ago - I guess its been 10 maybe 15 years ago more now - there was a group of 4 families in Athens, Georgia, who were paying the mortgage on the church building because they had started a church and it had flourished for a while but somehow the vision got distorted and disruptions came and divisions occurred

and the church died. But there were four families that remained faithful to God.

They came into my office one day and said - Can you help us? We believe that God wants us to have a viable, vibrant, full gospel, Spirit-filled church in Athens, Georgia. We believe that you can help us? Would Mount Paran help us?

Well, we sent some people over there - I went over there - we had a few services and people showed up.

Then we sent David Cooper over there and you helped to support him for a year and out of those four people - they took a temple partnership with the Lord -- in ten years there was built a church of 1,500 people that impacted and continues to impact Athens, Georgia, because there were people who had a partnership with the Lord.

Let me tell you something -- when you link up with the power of God and you live out His Church in the world, whatever we touch that person is convicted by the Holy Spirit. We sow the seeds and the Holy Spirit brings the harvest. Amen, amen and amen... That's the timeless life. Anybody know what I'm talking about? That's the timeless life. Praise God in this place.

You see this is not a spectator sport. This is not just sitting down and watching God do His thing. This is coming with an open heart and saying - Here I am - I am one of your agents Lord, I'm one of your partners Lord, you infuse me with your anointing and your Spirit and send me into the world that I might proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. Amen, amen and amen....

Well is this all right? Is this all right? Hallelujah be to God.

Well, you say - Pastor Walker, okay I'm getting the point. If I'm to live a timeless life, to have a timeless look at a temporary life then what I've got to see is that first of all it takes a time priority, it takes a temple partnership, but it is also going to take in the third place -- it is going to take a testimony participation.

“Daily in the temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

What is the great witness in the world today? The great witness doesn't just come through television. The great witness doesn't just come through radio. Both of those are very important, but yet at the same time if you run a survey and try to find out how many people really came to the Lord through television and how many

really came to the Lord through radio, it would be important, but the most significant number of people won to the kingdom today are in a person-person relationship. When somebody comes up and says - Come and see what I have found. I have found a man who has the answer to every need and He turned my life around. I once was lost but now I am found. I once was blind, but now I see. I once was dead but now I am alive. That's the witness that God has given to us through the Holy Spirit to win the world. Hallelujah --- Praise God....

I don't know how we got along in the church before tape recorders. I don't know how anybody ever got saved before video tape? How did you ever make it without some kind of a tape that we can carry with us.

We know it is a modern marvel and has done a great work for God, but right now we are beginning to penetrate that 1040 window, that last hold out under the domination of Satan in the world. We are beginning to penetrate that. You know how we are doing it? We are not doing it through video tapes. We are not doing it through tapes of any kind. That day will come. That time will come when those will be valid. We are doing it now by sending in teams to walk the streets of cities who are under the bondage of Satan and pray intercessory prayer to bring that city

to its knees and get it ready for the great harvest that Jesus Christ is going to send because we are to participate in the telling. “You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me.” The good Lord says. Praise Him in this place...

I don't know how people can have the joy of the Lord and come to church and shout every Sunday and fill up this sanctuary every Sunday morning and fill these altars. I don't know how you can walk out of here and keep silent about who God is. Hello. You all still here? We get excited on Sunday morning and that is as it should be. We get excited on Sunday night and that is as it should be. But God wants some excitement on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday - that where you are there is the fellowship of excitement. Amen, amen and amen... It ought to be exciting to be a Christian. We got enough dead churches that are going down the tubes.

God wants to resurrect us. He wants to send a resurrecting spirit to raise up His army to give them the weapons of the Spirit and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and to send them into do battle so that we can invade the territory

of Satan and pull down his strongholds and claim the victory that belongs to Him.

Amen, amen and amen....

ILLUSTRATION

You know it is interesting - it is risky - and it is kind of scary when you start thinking about witnessing and testifying.

I had opportunities on planes from time to time. I always tell you about my successes. I never mention the failures. I'm wise.

But I was on a plane one time and sitting by a young lady and as we moved along we started talking and I knew immediately she was trying to lead me up so she could witness to me.

I thought this is going to be fun.

So I gave her one hard time for about twenty minutes. I raised every excuse. I raised every argument. I raised up everything and finally said - You know, I'm never going to join a church. There are too many hypocrites in the church.

She was getting exasperated with me by that time.

She said - I don't know why not. There is always room for one more. You might as well go ahead and join.

I just kept leading her on and finally... She did a really good job. She really witnessed to me but I made myself such a hard case.

She finally said - you know, I never thought it but I am not even sure there is any hope for you. At that point I said - Oh yes there is hope for me because I pastor a 12000 member Pentecostal Charismatic Church in Atlanta, Georgia and I thought she was going to slug me.

She said - You know, I thought I knew who you were.

Was your picture ever on the cover of Ministries Today Magazine with Mylon LeFevre?

I said - Yes.

She said, I thought I knew who you are.

I don't know why I witnessed to you but you must have needed it or I never would have witnessed to you.

###

Well so she had the last word.

But you never know the seed that you sow.

ILLUSTRATION

I was preaching out in Texas on one occasion in a conference in a convention to do the keynote speech that evening and after the service was over a young man came up to me and he said - I want to meet you. Said, I want to tell you a story.

He said - I was in Dessert Storm and after Dessert Storm was over and I came back (He was a captain in the Army.) - He said, I had some furlow time and I was down on the beach in Florida and I had lost my way. It was good to win the war but I had seen all that devastation and somehow I got real cynical about life in general. What good is life if that is all there is, is a high-tech war? I was walking the beach and there was a young lady sitting up there and she was sitting there reading a Bible. I thought to myself - There is a woman reading a Bible, I wonder if she would talk to me. I went up and sat down beside her and we struck up a conversation and she shared her testimony with me.

He said _ I had never been a Christian; I had gone to church in my earlier days but never became a Christian. So I said - How do I become a Christian. She said - I don't know I can tell you adequately; I can tell you what happened in my life. She shared her experience. Said - But if you would come to my church in Atlanta, Georgia, the Mount Paran Church of God, I am sure you would get saved.

He thought about it and said - Well, how do I do that?

She said - You should have plenty of money. Why don't you just fly up there Sunday and I will meet you at the Church.

Gave him the address and told him everything and sure enough he flew up here. On Sunday morning he got in the service and the Holy Spirit got a hold of his heart and he came forward and received Jesus Christ as His savior. For about three months he came up here just about every fourth or fifth Sunday until he said - I was almost broke and I couldn't afford it any longer after that.

But he said - I began to feel the call to minister. He said that was over a year ago and said - Since that time I have married and I married a Christian. She is Spirit-filled and I am Spirit-filled and I am called to the ministry.

I just wanted to come to this conference to tell you what happened when one of your members testified to me on a beach down in Florida.

Hallelujah be to God. Tell it on the housetops; tell it on the mountain; let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen, amen and amen.

Hallelujah...

###

The point is all the evangelists are sitting in the pews. You all still here?

The evangelists are sitting in the pews.

We talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit - We are filled with a purpose and that purpose is to be a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have this great gift of God and God wants us to share that gift.

We have the gift of life and He wants us to share that gift of life. We do it through a time priority; we do it through a temple partnership; we do it through a testimony participation.

We also do it through a timeless personality.

“Daily and in the temple and in every house they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

He is the timeless personality. He is the foundation upon which all of this rest. In Him is where we find eternal life. The eternal life comes from the fact that there is an empty tomb. That eternality of God is recognized to us in the fact that He resurrected from the dead. And He lives eternally in our hearts.

I have had the privilege of going to Israel and many of you have accompanied Carmelita and me on some of those trips.

ILLUSTRATION

I have had many moving experiences in what we know as the Garden Tomb. The Garden Tomb is a place that was probably much like where Christ was buried and then rose again. We are not sure it is the exact place; could be the exact place, but we know it is in proximity to where it had to occur. This has been excavated and was found. You can see a replica of an ancient tomb just like what Christ was buried. It is a real tomb. They have made the Garden around it very beautiful and there are places there to worship God and have communion.

That timeless personality is what really makes it happen.

I had the privilege of taking my father and mother there. My father had traveled all over the world but had never been to Israel.

Of all the places that we visited on that trip the thing that fascinated him the most was the Garden Tomb. I thought we would never get him out of the empty tomb.

We got ready to leave and got everybody out of the Garden and headed for the bus and -- "Where is Dad?" Mother said, "I don't know." Went back in the

Garden Tomb and he was in the empty tomb. He just couldn't seem to get over the fact of that resurrected Christ.

“He is not here. He is risen as He says.”

For He is the timeless personality.

“Daily in the temple and in every house they cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

He is the timeless energizes for “By Him were all things created.” By Him - He is the first-born of the creation. By Him - all things hold together. In Him - everything consists.

There is a fate that holds this universe together. It is more than molecules protons and neurons and electrons. It is more than the Theory of Relativity and it is more than some kind of an electronic chip in the Internet. It is more than satellites in the sky and spaceships in the stratosphere.

What really holds this whole vast universe together - “By faith the universe was formed” Hebrews 11 and 1 tells us. Because here there is a timeless personality. And He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

ILLUSTRATION

We were worshipping once in the Garden Tomb and we had brought with us a woman who had a Catholic background. She was a part of Mount Paran but she had a strong desire to go to the midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

She was suffering from cancer and the doctors had only given her about a year to live barring a miracle. They were able to give her enough medication so she was strong enough to make the trip but the cancer was spreading fast. They had been unable to stop its spread. It was in partial remission so she could make the trip. She just knew that if she got to that midnight mass in Bethlehem she would be healed.

The choir sang at that midnight service that they had in Bethlehem Square but the church was crowded to capacity. Even though she had a ticket she couldn't get in close enough to really become a part of that midnight mass. She left somewhat disappointed.

The next day - the next day - on Christmas day we were in the Garden Tomb worshipping. We were worshipping and we took communion together and all of a sudden I heard sobs coming from the back bench. There were about 300 people

with us then. I looked and she was crying profusely. All of a sudden she lifted her hands and said quietly - "I am healed - I am healed - I am healed - I am healed."

Well the whole group of us were touched by the Spirit of God but we didn't want her to be disappointed. We didn't want it to just be an illusion or the setting or the context of the build-up. So we tried to caution her. You know - any time there is any wild fire you don't have to worry about it - there will be enough wet blankets around to put it out.

We didn't want her to be disappointed and I felt like God had healed her but you know sometimes to expect that miracle, hard for us people who have been raised in scientific America, sophisticated America to believe in miracles. My goodness we have all the answers in the test tubes.

How could there be a miracle?

So I said - When you get home I'm going to be praying with you. I want you to go to the doctor as soon as you can and have the tests run and I want to hear from you.

We got back home within a week and maybe ten day she called me one day at the office. She said - I'm reporting in - said, The doctors are amazed. They said - We have heard about it but we have never seen it. This must be a miracle.

##

Hallelujah. That's a timeless look at the temporary life.

What Satan wants to do is get us caught up in everything temporary. We are in this disposable society. We survive because we can throw things away. We throw them away and have to buy new ones. Right? That's our economy. Our economy is built that way. I mean we can build light bulbs that will never burn out. Thomas Edison done it already. You ever visit his place in Fort Myers, you find one that has been burning there for over twenty years.

But we are built on things disposable. That's okay; I get tired of the stuff anyhow. So why not get something new and start all over? We understand capitalism.

But see that is not the issue. Because you don't find your happiness in a face lift. You don't find your happiness in meeting society's criteria. You find your happiness when you take a timeless look at the temporary life.

ILLUSTRATION

We all know the name Amy Grant. It is real blessing to all of us. We have listened to her records and we have heard her sing on television. We have seen her in person.

I ran across this the other day. It appeared in Aspire Magazine.

In the mid-1980s singer Amy Grant's life was not as charmed as it appeared. Troubles in her marriage. Her husband, Gary's, cocaine habit and the subsequent talk of divorce left Amy in one of her darkest moments.

She remembered (and thus is a quote from her) - "For a few days I just stayed in bed and mourned my life."

This is a young lady who had the world at her feet. Sang on the major networks. Was acclaimed as one of the bright talents of the day.

"The only hope I could seem to see was just junking it all, moving to Europe, and starting everything all over again. It was then my sister in a last ditch visit, marched up right beside my bed and said - "Fine go to Europe. leave it all behind. Start your life again, but before you go tell my little girl how you can change that Jesus can help her through anything in her life but that he couldn't help you."

Well - Amy says - "The words hit home."

Amy and Gary began marriage and personal counseling and slowly they have built their relationship with each other and with God.

Through that timeless personality - Jesus Christ.

###

As every head is bowed and every eye is closed. We are looking to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think...

SERVICE CLOSES