

W_60_Ephesians_6_Closing_Study.mp3

[00:00:02] We are recording a study in Ephesians chapter six. Which will bring this series of expositions of the epistle to the Ephesians for to a close. Not that we mean to say that we have exhausted the scriptures. They would exhaust us to the end of time. And it is our custom in this meeting to read a portion of scripture together. And those of you who are listening to this recording may like to share this. If so, we suggest you switch off for a while and read with us the Acts of the Apostles Chapter nine verses 1 to 31. As I think we all know, this epistle to the Ephesians has been before us for some considerable time and we're very happy that the whole of the series has been recorded and we hope will go on its way as God opens the door for that opportunity. It's a scriptural expression, a door of utterance. I don't know whether the Apostle Paul ever envisaged recording tapes, but he had a great idea of a door of utterance. Well, if ever that was a name needed, I think we can give it to this wonderful invention which we lay at the feet of our Lord. I've received a letter from one of the friends that come to this meeting, which has reminded me that with the best intentions in the world, I sometimes omit something. It's sometimes rather amusing. This is not amusing, but sometimes it is at the end of the meeting when you've given your all and your utmost, somebody says to you you didn't say anything about so and so.

[00:01:43] Well, of course that's good discipline. We never shall get to the bottom of this book. But when I stressed last time that we wrestle not against flesh and blood. I forgot to say that it was very likely that the spiritual powers will use flesh and blood. They do. You can't work in an office or even in your own home without being conscious that sometimes the human instrument, without really knowing it is being used by an unseen power of darkness. But at the same time, it helps us to look upon those human instruments a little more kindly than if we didn't know we really fitted them. They think they are working their own ends. They are being used by another. So I'll just make that amends that while we do not wrestle with flesh and blood as such, we shall find fine flesh and blood will be often in our way and will have to be dealt with as the Lord directs. When are we coming? This evening to the closing section of this great epistle. And we want to discover something of its spirit as well as its its teaching. How will the Apostle close this epistle? When you strike an attitude, what do you say to himself or down? I'm the apostle to the Gentiles. I'm the prisoner of the Lord. I alone have received the mystery.

[00:03:09] I must end up on a very high note. Or will he be just himself by the mercy of God? An instrument. A vessel he calls himself an earthen vessel. And the value of the earthen vessel is because of the treasure in it. Oh, I'm so glad that it didn't strike attitudes that sometimes he forgot and stepped down very low in order that he may magnify the Lord on high. And so while he stresses prayer, as you remember, we start our consideration at verse 18, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. And for me, that's a little bit. He didn't say, Oh, you believers, you need to pray for one another and you need to pray for yourself. He says, And I want you to pray for me. You see, that's an apostle. An apostle needed the prayers of those who needed him. That's a gracious thought, isn't it? And it's good for us to have it emphasized as it is here. But first of all, let us notice that in the beginning of this epistle, he starts off with a wonderful revelation of truth. Then stops and says, Now I'm going to pray for you that you may know. And it goes right through this epistle and ends up with a wonderful exhibition of extraordinary corresponding practice. And says, Now I'm going to pray and I want you to pray for me that I may make known.

[00:04:43] Do you see the first prayer is I pray for you that you may know and your prayer is you pray for me that I may make known. Do you realize, friends, that you sometimes can answer your own prayers? Because that's God. That's what God intends. Shall I say it again? I pray for you that you may know. Now you pray for me. That I may make known. And the more they pray for him, the more they would know. So sometimes you see, we get the idea that the man up here who is speaking is the be all and the end all of the meeting and all the folks that are sitting there are just negative soaking it in or that isn't so. Friends, we work together and it may be that these meetings would have been better and I should have been richer and fuller in my teaching. If while I speak to you, you were speaking to the Lord for him, there's plenty of room for improvement in both cases, isn't there? Mine and yours, so that we have that first thought. In the first section of prayer that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the inheritance, what the mighty power in this case, that I may make known the mystery of the gospel. Now, that has been made a mystery in a wrong sense. What is the mystery of the gospel? Well, there is no mystery in the gospel because the gospel goes right back to even the days when God preached the gospel before unto Abraham, as Galatians said, the epistle to the Romans.

[00:06:18] It says, as he promised before in the Holy Scriptures, the Gospel. But the mystery of the gospel is this feature which the Apostle has opened up in this epistle, this glorious calling with its wondrous hope, this marvelous inheritance with its great riches and his exceeding great power that almost takes our breath away, which links us to the risen and ascended Christ. Well, now, at the end, he sums it all up with this mystery, this wonderful thing which God has revealed in connection with the Gospel entrusted to me. We still look at verse 18 for a moment. He says, Praying always. And I notice in chapter 520, he says, says giving thanks always. And. He enjoins upon them unceasing prayer. He says in Colossians 113. Um. One, three. I'm sorry. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Praying always for you. Now, how is it possible for anyone with an ordinary, everyday life, let alone a life like the apostles that was crowded from morning to night to pray without ceasing? Well, it must mean that it's having a little more than what some people think prayer involves. If we have an opportunity. Friends, let us seize it with both hands to be able to go aside and shut ourselves in so that without distraction we may have a time of prayer.

[00:07:56] But in a world like this. How many of us are going to have that opportunity? Are we going to say that everything else must slide while we have our quiet time? Although the sunlight, but while they are having their quiet time in the little room there, somebody else is being cluttered up with all the work they've left them to do. And that doesn't seem to be in harmony with the mind of God. So I take courage by the fact that Nehemiah prayed to the Lord and he said unto the King. And he never went into a quiet room. He never shut his eyes. He never put his hands together. Prayer is the burden of a sign. The falling of a deer, the upward glancing of an eye. When none but God is near. That may be so. And nobody else may know. You're praying. So this man could say pray without ceasing. Pray Always. I'd like you to look, if you will, at Psalm 109, verse four, so that having seen it, you'll be able to refer to it again if you should so wish. 109 verse four. In this psalm is very much concerned with opposition. He says in verse two. So the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me. They have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred and fought against me without a cause.

[00:09:40] For my love. They are my adversaries. But I give myself unto prayer. Now you say, Yes, I can see that. But what I want you to notice is there is no word give

myself unto. In the original. It's just in italics. And what he actually says is I am a prayer. Not. Maybe I say a prayer, but I am a prayer. All my circumstances and my own feelings and all this hatred to me and my attitude is all going up to God as a prayer. So you see, we'll use every opportunity to shut our eyes and put our hands together and we'll pray. But occasionally we may have to pray with our eyes open and with our hands busy at work when when everybody else thinks that we're occupied with other things. So we can pray and we. We can give thanks without ceasing. As one another feature, though. Praying always with all prayer and supplication. These two words seem to give us the idea of what prayer is. Prayer is largely expressing a sense of need, and supplication suggests something that you're afraid of. And the two together. Our need and an external foe will often drive us to prayer. Well, nothing else would. But he also says watching thereunto and watching with all perseverance. Watch it. Doesn't that take you back to our Savior's words? Let us go back and see. One of the most awful experiences speaking youvery that our Savior went through in Matthew 26, where these words occur.

[00:11:35] Matthew 26. Verse 40. And he cometh unto the disciples and finding them asleep and saith unto Peter. What? Could you not watch with me? One hour. Watch with me. Even the Son of God is saying that to a disciple. Watch with me. And then he said to them, Watch and pray that you may enter. That ye enter not into temptation. So this watchfulness is a part of God's will for us, and you might get to other passages first. Peter Chapter five Just to supplement this. This is one angle. One Peter five Verse eight Be sober. Be vigilant because your adversary, the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. That word. Be vigilant is this word. Watch. And the other passage is one that Selonians Chapter five. Wonder Selonians Chapter five, where we read in connection with the Day of the Lord and so on that is coming. It says verse six, Therefore, let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober. And in verse ten, who died for us that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Now we have to think that that waking and sleeping is just an echo of Chapter four. But it isn't. The words are different. But whether we are watchful or drowsy in chapter four, it's whether you sleep. That's the meaning of the word. But in chapter five, it isn't sleep.

[00:13:21] It's mean that you're drowsy. You're drowsy. And the word wake doesn't mean to wake up from sleep, but it means to be watchful. So whether you're watchful or drowsy, we should live together with him. He died for that. But whether that's going to

be something that we're all going to aim at, that it doesn't matter whether we're watchful or drowsy, we're sure to be with him. Because there's another aspect to that where he enjoins upon us to watch lest we enter into temptation. And so some lose something. And so we come back to Ephesians chapter six and we look again at those words of the Apostle. This is for All Saints and for me is a lovely lack of self consciousness. And then the next thing is to see what he prays for or what he wants them to pray for. And for me, that utterance may be given unto me. And in this parallel epistle Colossians, he goes even further, to use a word which is very significant. Colossians for both Ephesians and Colossians cover the same ground, were written about the same time and supplement one another. It's very often a wise thing before ever you look at or before ever. You try to explain a verse in Ephesians, make sure whether it's not already explained for you in Colossians. I'll come back to an illustration of that in a moment. Colossians four, verse three with all praying also for us. That God would open unto us a door.

[00:14:56] Doesn't that suggest something? A man in prison. Not in Wormwood Scrubs or in Brixton. Not in Strangeways Prison, Manchester, where I often go where there are certain amenities. When I go into Strangeways prison, I have a look on the walls and see what new pictures have been contributed by an association who hang there temporarily. Then I glimpse into a place where there's a library and the convicts are all lining up and getting books out to read. But there are no pictures on the wall in Paul's prison and no books in other pathetic. He says all bring the parchments. The books that are left behind at Triton and especially the parchments. So he is in prison, and it would have been excusable if he said, Oh, pray for me that the door may be open and I may be liberated. But the man was so full of the message that he had to give so completely swallowed up in accordingly, which he rejoiced that he could use the word open door and never think about a prison. Isn't that lovely? Well, that's the way to treat all these things that come to us in this life. Look through them. Look beyond them. To see the hand that the man outside doesn't know. Quoting, of course, again, another well known verse from a writer. He said. Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage. The prison is a prison in the deepest sense.

[00:16:20] When you react to it like that. But here was a man in triumph over it. So he said, with all praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance. That's it. A door, yes, but a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak. I like that little word ought

because he spoke about himself as I ought to speak. And if you like a little study, just for your own sake and for your own guidance, just go through the ways in which the apostle has told people what they ought to do. You'll be surprised, you know, where people chase us about telling us what we ought to do, where we ought to go and how we ought to speak, how we ought to dress. Oh, dear. The things we ought to do. You won't find that in the apostle. He says what I ought to do. You've got as much as he could do to be in line with God's will for him. And that was a finer way of telling us how we should be in line than chasing us about and telling us what we ought to do. Occasionally, I'm a bit rude. I know that sometimes I am. And when a person starts this ought I say, don't forget in our language ought means nothing sometimes. Well, then time they figured that out.

[00:17:34] I'm on their way, you see. Well, now and for me, verse 19, that utterance utterance may be given unto me an open mouth. An open door. The word utterance means, as he goes on to explain that am I open my mouth boldly? So in both prayers, there's a need for an opening. In the one in Colossians. An open door. And in Ephesians and open mouth when it comes to the same thing, doesn't it? It was letting the Word of God be released. And again, you'll find the same spirit. This man was again apprehended, as far as I understand, the history of his life. He was set free temporarily and then he was going to apprehended. In that time, he knew that he was never coming out of prison except to be led to execution. He knew that. And so this is what he says, writing to Timothy in two Timothy when he was commenting upon the new character of his imprisonment, because when he was at Rome at the first time, he had his own hired house, he had his lodging and all could come unto him. He was a sort of political prisoner. There was no crime against him. But now the very fact that he was a Christian made him a criminal because the laws had changed, the attitude of Rome had changed, and it now meant death. So he said in two Timothy Chapter two. Verse eight. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel Whereon wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer.

[00:19:12] As a matter of fact, that's where I am now. That's my status. No longer living in my own hired house and being treated with some measure of respect, wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds. And then the spirit of the man rises up, even unto bonds. But the word of God is not bound. Open door. Not for me, but for the word. Open door that the word may be free to run. So here he says, even unto bonds.

But the word of God is not bound. So therefore, is that man selfless? That the ministry entrusted to him may go right to the end, even as he said when he faced bonds and imprisonments, he said, None of these things move me. Neither. Count all my life, dear unto myself, that I may finish my course with joy. He didn't say throw my life away. He doesn't say I take all sorts of risks and don't care, he says. I'm more concerned about the life than ever. I'm more watchful that I don't do something silly for I want to finish my course with joy. I now take this life of mine as a trust, and I think it's a fine spirit, at least to have in front of you, even though you may not always rise to it. So he says here in June 6th that I may open my mouth boldly.

[00:20:30] It was one of the things which is noted in that Chapter nine, which we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that immediately after this man had been converted on the road to Damascus and Ananias had come to him and the scales had fallen from his eyes, he went out and spoke boldly. And is it twice, boldly? So we may say, Well, do you see that was the character of the man. That's the sort of man he was. You couldn't stop him. But that's not quite true, friends. He is the apostle Paul actually writing to the Corinthians that he was among them in fear and trembling. Well, we don't quite think a preacher ought to be standing fear and in fear and trembling before his congregation. Do we? Shouldn't think so. And yet this man admits it. He said, I know that when I came to you, you were all agog. You thought all this man's the steward of the mysteries, the secrets, and that tickled you. You thought, Oh, we should have a lovely meeting. Wonderful revelations are going to be given of the secret purposes of God. But he said you were carnal. You were walking like men and so disappointed you. I determined to know nothing. Among you say Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in fear and trembling because I knew what a hullabaloo that was going to be.

[00:21:44] Because I'd taken that line. Isn't that fine to know the man was a little bit afraid of what they were going to do? Do you remember the words that came to us the other evening? Extracted from a writer? Courage is fear that has said its prayers. I'll say it again. This man's courage. Was because he did have fear. But he said his prayers and says, I'm going through with it. Whatever you may think or whatever the consequence is. Or again, take the words, he acts 18. Here's another sample. The 18th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles verses nine and ten. 18. Nine and ten. They inspect the Lord of all in the night by a vision. Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee. Well, that might be where the Lord would stop. And that would be

wonderful, wouldn't it? You speak. I am with thee. But he knew what was going on in the mind of Paul. It's a terrible thing to be involved in a riot in an eastern land. In those days. And so the Lord said. And no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city. I don't know how you feel, but I shrink from a mob. I went to school myself to wait for a bus rather than fight and struggle to get on. And I can sympathize with this man with all the horror of being tangled up with a jostling, lot of people never knowing what they were going to do to him.

[00:23:27] And the Lord said, All right, Paul, I know you. I've chosen you. I know just your frailty as well as your strength. I'm with you. And no man shall set upon you to hurt you. I've got much people in this city. Now, that's the man who says I still need boldness. I still need boldness, Paul. You've been in prison. You've been beaten with rods, you've suffered shipwreck. You've been a day and a night in the deep. You've. Oh, you're talking about boldness. The AC side. And then I can almost think that he would go back over his ground and he would say. But I can preach to myself in prison as well as I can talk to you. I've already written this in my epistle that are now ending that we have access into the presence of God. But he said, I've already said we have access with boldness. And confidence. Oh, yes, he said, I know if I have got access with boldness into the presence of God, surely I can have boldness in the presence of anybody. Yeah. So that's where doctrine and practice have to come together. Paul knew that as well as I do and much better. But he also knew that he needed to be reminded sometimes and the prayers of God's people were a part of that discipline. I don't think John Knox in Scotland was what you might call a very likeable person, but he lived in times that were not very likeable.

[00:24:55] But it is written of him. He allies, a man who, fearing God, feared the face of no man. Well, that's a good idea. If you want to be delivered from the fear of men. You seek to please him and put him first and middle and last. And then the other thing will fall into its place. So we've got this idea now. We've also already suggested in our earlier words that sometimes we can help to answer our own prayers. Now, you won't misunderstand me, will you? But you see. He put the two prayers in balance. I pray for you now. You pray for me. I pray for you that you may know. You pray for me. That I may make known. Now, if I never prayed for Paul, they would lose some of his teaching. But if they did pray for him, they may get some more. It doesn't it balance. And in Philippians, we've already seen this in earlier meetings, but it won't do any harm to see

it again in chapter one. We have another way in which we may help or hinder the answer of prayer. Here it is. Chapter 119. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation that may possibly be his deliverance from prison. Through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. According to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed.

[00:26:25] But that with all boldness, as always. So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. All that's to do with the prayer. You notice there are three features in it. You are praying for me. Christ is at the right hand of God with all the necessary power to answer it, and I'm earnestly expecting it with all that addition that with all boldness. So as always, Christ should be magnified in my body. That's the answer to the prayer. That's the complete thing. If these Philippians were praying for Paul and if Christ at the right hand was absolutely winning and Paul wasn't bothering, there'd be no answer. It must be you pray, I expect. And that links the two together. So again, you see, these may be lessons that we need to have emphasized for our own blessing as well as others. Now he calls himself in Ephesians chapter six by a title. And I wouldn't put it past the Apostle to have a little twinkle in his eye, even in prison. I think there was a little twinkle in his eye in a sense, when he said, But the word of God is not bound. He said it not that I'm bound, but you can't bind this word. I believe he would have been a little bit sympathetic with the Cockney humour that acts a little bit like that in great stress.

[00:27:51] I had a feeling that I mean, I did it once in my life. When I look in my room and saw the whole of my room covered with a broken ceiling and the only piece of visible writing on my desk were the words, None of these things moves are waved across to invisible Hitler. I said, All right, we'll carry on. But if the Apostle Paul would have liked that little bit, and if I'm not like the Apostle Paul and anything else, I mistake that must not have it closely. Well, here he said, I'm an ambassador in Bonds and perhaps the translation is I conduct an embassy in a chain. Now, you know, if a man is appointed to one of these positions, he has an insignia of his office. He has a chain or he has an order or he has a decoration. The mayor has his chain and it's a part of the office that he should wear it. Well, he says, I've got a chain. I'm an ambassador. Look at me, chain. But it's not made of gold. It's fastened to my wrist. To the wrist of the Roman soldier. But I've got a chain and I conduct an embassy. You might notice the same word is used once more by him in two Corinthians five, as he's used only once more. We

ought to look at it. Two Corinthians five, verse 19, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

[00:29:28] Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. So what's an ambassador? As though God did beseech you by us. We are on an embassy. We, in some measure, are representing him. He is distant. We are coming near to you. He has given us some commission and authority. He has told us what the message is. We are seeking to deliver it as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God and Ambassador in Christ Stead. Coming to you. What a strange thing that the Ambassador of the Lord of Glory should be a poor, despised prisoner in Rome. All the ambassadors that go to Rome or went to Rome had all their insignia. They had their retinue, they had their apartments and they had their bands and they had their gladiatorial fights and they had the feeding of the people and whatnot. Fireworks. And another one. Not this man. But he is an ambassador of a greater king has ever sat upon a throne in this world. The ambassador of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords was a prisoner. Same time he said, I've got a chain. That's the sort of spirit that I think we want to remember is a gift of God to us and to encourage it rather than otherwise. He speaks about his chain 2 or 3 times. I think we ought to see those things, too.

[00:31:01] For he wore it for our sakes. Acts 21:33. Acts 21:33 where it reads. Then the chief captain came near and took him and commanded him to be bound with two chains. And demanded who he was and what he had done. With two Chains. And that's the indication of the type of prisoner he was. He always had two Roman guards. With a chain to each wrist. At the man who was an ambassador for Christ. And then in chapter 28, verse 20, he's now arrived at Rome as a prisoner. And he says in verse 20, for this cause. Therefore, have I called for you to see you and to speak with you? Because that for the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain. This chain. It was still there. He could show it this chain. And again, in the end of Colossians, when he says verse 18, the salutation by the hand of the Paul Remember my bonds. Why does he put it there like that? Well, he picked up the pen to put his signature, and there was the old chain banging about on the end of the table. Remember it. And then finally, he says in two. Timothy 1:16, two, Timothy 1:16. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Odysseus for the off refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain. So you see, that chain was a sort of a little symbol. Whenever we go a stage further.

[00:33:09] He says that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak. We've already drawn attention to the fact that it was as he ought to speak and not as you ought to speak. It was very much concerned about what his debt was and to fulfill it. Now he comes to another phase of the concluding of this great epistle, but that ye also may know my affairs and how I do Tychicus a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord shall make known to you all things whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts. Now, that's the last words of this epistle. And you may say How strange. In the middle prayer. He goes right up. Right up until it's. Until all the fullness of God. But when he gets to the end, he says that you may know our affairs and how I do. Very lowly note struck. No theatricals here. All my affairs and how I do. Would you notice one little illustration? Of this man's complete innocence of striking an attitude. One Timothy Chapter five. One Timothy Chapter five, verse 21. I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels. That is a very solemn introduction, isn't it? The Elect Angels verse 23. Drink No longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach sake. So the apostle didn't mind mixing up the elect angels with Timothy Stomach in two verses.

[00:34:58] He didn't seem incongruous in it. He didn't say, Oh, I mustn't say that. Now I've said about the elect Angels. He was a man who was just simple. He spoke the truth as he saw it. And the truth is, one, you might not realize that elect angels belong to the same universe as Timothy Stomach. But they do all at last come under the one range of creature and creator. And it's good for us to remember that while we are concerned with the mysteries of the faith. We are living in 1955 and we're living in this world and all our affairs and how I do is a legitimate part of Christian interest. We can't always be visiting the sick. We can't always be doing the work for somebody else who is laid up. But at least where it does come our way and is within the realm of possibility. It's a part of Christian witness. And even if we cannot do anything. We can be interested. We can manifest an interest in all our affairs and how I do. I think that the person who is laid aside in sickness or isolation for any reason, it's a great cheer to know that somebody has just been inquiring about him. Somebody had asked how he is. And if ever you're writing to somebody and you could possibly put that in because don't invent it. Don't tell a lie for the truth's sake.

[00:36:28] But if you can possibly put it in, don't forget it. And even if you do, forget it. Put at the bottom. P. S aren't merely. Hannah said she hopes you getting on nicely. You don't know what that means, do you? Have you heard about us, though? You have the missionary out in India? I think it was rather was rebuked. I think, first of all, because in a letter instead of sending home, oh, a wonderful description of the trials they had getting across this desert and the awful things they had in getting to this place and the wonderful Earth, She said, I'm so glad to hear that mother at last has got some sort of apparatus. I don't know what it was, a half broom or something. The idea was that she wasn't so much up in the clouds, but what she could be glad to think that her mother's prejudice are getting a little bit of help in the kitchen and at last broken down. And she bought this. That shows you a link right out there in India with the mother that was left behind. Sydney, from our point of view, but not from the God who looked down and said he left Angels and Timothy stomach all a part of Paul's concern and the legitimate witness. So we need not, I think, strike any attitudes should we think again. The epistle opens with the words all spiritual blessings and emphatically ends with all my affairs.

[00:37:52] Well, they were very far apart. There were very few spiritual blessings that Paul was enjoying except by prospect. In that prison they put the two together are revealed. The all spiritual blessings are now asking you that you might be concerned about all my affairs and these spiritual blessings were in heavenly places, and Paul's affairs were limited to a prison in prison. So we got a beginning and an end. All spiritual blessings, all my affairs and how I do in heavenly places and in prison. But I'm not finished yet. Friends? No, no. Because it goes on to say all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. And Paul could have said all my affairs in prison, in the Lord. That's it. That's the all encompassing circumference, as it were. Whatever our experience is. Sharp, bitter sweet. They are all eventually encompassed either in Christ with regard to our position there or in the Lord, who is superintending everything that takes place with regard to us down here. And then we have not yet ended this epistle or began it because after saying all this. Ends as he does every epistle with a benediction. Verse 23. Peace to the brethren and love with faith from God, the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. And I suppose you know that Grace be with you all, Grace. Be with whatever it is the Apostle said was his sign manual in every epistle.

[00:39:44] We've had this before, but in case anybody should miss it, or in case those who are going to listen to this broadcasting have never had it, should we have it once more? Because this is important in many ways. Will you turn to two Thessalonians chapter two? Two Thessalonians Chapter two. Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us as the day of Christ is at hand. So there was evidently a letter, an epistle that had been sent to this church purporting to come from the Apostle Paul. A deception. Now, in this same epistle, Chapter three, he says these words, verse 16. Now the Lord of Peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord be with you all. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle. So I write. I write like this. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. He says you need not be deceived. God will not permit anyone to send an epistle. And put those words at the end if it's not true. But you say, but anybody can write the words grace be with you. They can unless God stops them. And he says, No, that's my sign manual. I write like this.

[00:41:21] And when you see that handwriting and you see those words, you've got an index as to the author. So should we look at one Timothy which is immediately weightiness because he might forget it when he wrote a private epistle to Timothy. But the very last words were Grace be with thee. Amen. Is he those words written in Paul's handwriting and Chapter two. Timothy, Chapter four. Grace be with you. Amen. Written in his own handwriting. Two of them. Shall we have a look at Hebrews, which everybody who knows much about the teaching of Scripture seems to say Paul couldn't have written. He couldn't have written Hebrews. Oh, no. So we just have a look and see what comes at the end of Hebrews. Grace be with you all. Amen. You know, somehow I'm rather going to be a stick in the mud and say that one's a bit of getting over. And every one of Paul's epistles, however long the benediction or that may be your salutation, it's always got those words embedded in it. Grace with you, every one of them. And then if you'd like to look at James or Peter, Jude or John, not one of them. Not one of them ever use it. So there are 14 episodes that use the sign manual of the Apostle Paul, and they are the ones that have been written by that apostle and no one else. Well, that's one thing I wanted you to notice. There's another thing coming back to Ephesians six.

[00:42:48] Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ. Insincerity. Now, this word sincerity means with incorruption. If you'll turn to two, Timothy 110, you'll see the

same word. Two. Timothy 110. That is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality, incorruptibility, incorruption to light. And the next time he uses it in Titus chapter two, he uses it in a moral sense, not in the future resurrection sense. Titus two, verse seven. In all things, showing thyself a pattern of good works in doctrine, showing and corruptness, gravity, sincerity and corruptness. Now, why does the Apostle go out of his way to say, uncorrupt this? Should we look at the beginning of this epistle again just now? You know, I said to you, Look, all spiritual blessings how I do in heavenly places, in prison, in Christ, in the Lord. Or I was artful because I'm going to go back a bit further to the beginning and a bit to the end. Look at chapter one again. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints, which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. Now, every believer who is sanctified by the blood of Christ is a saint. But every saint is not necessarily saintly always, and every saint is not necessarily faithful. There are indications in the scriptures. The saints of God.

[00:44:45] West town was very unfaithful. The officials have written to the Corinthians exposes a terrific slip in their morals so dreadful that we could hardly write to read some of the passages. Yet there were saints. So there were fights because of what Christ had done. But whether they were faithful now, you can't be faithful by proxy. Nobody else can be faithful for you. You're either faithful or you're not. Now we turn to the ending. He could have ended his benediction. Grace be with all them that love, our Lord Jesus Christ. And that would include everyone in this little company, wouldn't it? It's not possible for you to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, to know the blessedness of the forgiveness of sins and the glory of his great salvation and all the hope that's before you without having enough kindled. You love him. But would it be necessarily true that every single one of us in this little gathering love our Lord Jesus Christ in Incorruption? An incorruptible and. Faithfulness has to do with our attitude, our response. And you might like to notice the way in which this is suggested in another of Paul's epistles, two Corinthians Chapter two. Two Corinthians Chapter two. Verse 17. So we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God. But as of sincerity, but as of God in the sight of God speak, we in Christ. So there were many who did corrupt the Word of God.

[00:46:27] Now, they couldn't be corrupt in the Word of God unless they had something to do with it. A poor outside pagan idolater wasn't corrupting the Word of God. He wasn't doing anything with it. He's dealing with some who handled the Word of God

deceitfully. We are not as many which corrupt. The word of God. And this word takes us back to Isaiah chapter one when it speaks about the water and it means to water down like an innkeeper in those days sometimes was tempted to water down his wine when he sold it. Whether that was good or bad, I don't know from the title at this point of view. Perhaps I say the more water the better. But it was a dishonest thing. And he says we are not going to water down the word of God. If we do, we are not acting faithfully. And, you know, one of the biggest pressures and the biggest temptations that I've had to meet in my little experience is, can't you soft pedal this question of Acts 28? Can't you leave out any reference to the Lord's Supper? Can't you just take the basic things? You could do that wonderfully well and let people imagine or let people go on without you see all what a temptation to have doors open which are shut. We are not as many as who hucksterize the word of God. And so in chapter three, he says. And verse 12. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness or the margin boldness of speech.

[00:48:00] And not as Moses unveiled his face. All frames never yield to the temptation to veil. To water down. If you've got to speak boldly and plainly, speak it in love. Don't be aggressive. Don't be, in a sense, a nuisance. But nevertheless, you've been. You are a steward. You have been entrusted with something. It's not your own. You mustn't alter it because it doesn't appeal to somebody. That's not a stewardship. You wouldn't expect the postman as he was coming up the street reading your postcard. Of course he hasn't time in the London, but they do it in the country or used to. He said, Well, that's going to upset old mother so-and-so. So he takes his pen out and he alters it a little bit and she's beaming all over. Well, that's not right. She must know what the person said. We haven't got to alter the Word of God to suit our congregations. We've got to say now, that's what God said. And if you have any difficulties about it, let's meet together and hope to help one another. But we cannot water it down. We cannot alter it. And then he says in chapter two, two Corinthians, chapter four, he gives us a little bit of his own example. Two Corinthians four one. Therefore, seeing we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we faint not but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty.

[00:49:21] Not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Now that I believe is handling it without corruption. So at the beginning of the end of this epistle, it speaks about utter faithfulness and incorruption, and that opens

another door. I am not proposing to go further with it just now because I don't like to utter things when they're only half digested. But if this epistle is addressed to those who are faithful and those who love with Incorruption, then I'm I'm morally certain it's not addressed to all believers because I know any amount of believers who would not respond to that title. Well, then where are we? But I don't know. I leave that with you because this is the end of our study, but it only shows you do what you will pursue it as you may dig into its meanings for all your worth, there'll still be some more subjects left to occupy our time, our thought, our prayer and attention until travelling days are done. And so. While this recording brings our study in Ephesians to a close, I believe all would agree that they have not fitted us to begin all over again. This, while true, is not practicable. So commending all listeners to the God of all grace. Let us all humbly rejoice if we are able to see our calling and election to this high and wonderful hope, secure and then seek by grace to walk worthy of it.