

W349_Colossians_9.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the chapel of the opened book. The study before us is number nine of the series in the Epistle to the Colossians. It so happens that the subject that occupied our attention at the morning service. Is practically underneath and involved in the subject we consider today. I did hesitate and I thought, well, I don't want to overdo this. And yet, of course, there are those here this afternoon who didn't attend the morning service. And as this is a tape recording, there are ever so many more that will hear it than could even get into this chapel. So I'm going to suggest to those who were here this morning that they have a double responsibility if they hit it twice over. And they also have the joy of knowing that if it has any place in our witness, whatever the subject may be, well, we must give it to those who come in the afternoon. What an apology to make for the Word of God, but only just. I felt I would explain that it wasn't done. I didn't do it on purpose. It just come together like that. What I've said so much, some of you folks will say, Oh, and what was the subject this morning? Well, you see, in the mornings we have been considering for quite a number of Sunday mornings, step by step, the unity of the spirit. You know how it reads in Ephesians, for there is one body and one spirit.

[00:01:34] That's something we've been given to keep. And we face the fact that that was a unity made by God. It wasn't something we had to invent. It was something made by Christ, sealed by his blood and given to us as a sacred trust. Well, now we moved on from that by discovering that we had gifts, each one according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And then our thoughts were turned away from our little individual gifts to those early ones which the Ascended Christ gave. And the Ascended Christ gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints till they should reach the standard of the perfect man in other in other ways. We moved from the foundation of the unity of the Spirit to the attaining or the possibility of attaining unto the unity of the faith. And the word perfect was never dealt with. This morning. But it's waiting for us. And one of the words so translated means perfect. Perfect. That is to say, whatever is that doctrine in front of you, make it a living reality. Make it a fact. Now, one passage which we read in our reading this morning as struck some of God's people very strangely. I'm going to start off our study in Colossians in my ordinary method by going somewhere else. I just say that because in the earlier days when my daughters were here, that was one of the little jokes they

had at my expense that if I was going to start with Ephesians, I'd always turn to somewhere else.

[00:03:18] You see, that's on purpose now. Two Corinthians Chapter six. I won't read the passage. I'll only draw your attention that it's going right down this list. A list of things from verse 14 starting like this. But be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness and ends up in chapter seven, Verse one Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves. Oh. We cleanse ourselves now? Yes. This is making your separation, which is, by grace, a fact by practice. Don't you see there's two sides to those questions. One is our salvation is absolutely complete and perfect. It can never be taken away from. It can never be added to. So shall we sit down and twiddle our thumbs to the rest of time? No. We arise and walk in newness of life and seek to serve in newness of spirit. So if by the mercy of God, we are among those who are light instead of darkness and righteousness instead of unrighteousness, surely our response should be, as it says here, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

[00:04:43] And that's the bit that is such a difficulty, isn't it? You say, Well, of all things in Scripture or out of it, to use the word perfecting holiness. Doesn't Shakespeare somewhere have the same figure when he speaks about gilding the lily and painting the rose? No, it isn't that. We are not gilding the lily. We're only taking the holiness which is ours by marvelous gift and seeking to live up to it. Perfecting doesn't mean improving. Or, God forbid, that we should ever think we could improve on the holiness of God. But perfecting holiness means taking it to its legitimate conclusion. So did you see this word perfect? We've said it so many times. We will say it again. This word perfect has embedded in it, going on to the end. Telos. And all the derivatives come from Telos, which means the end. So the apostle uses the figure of a race when he uses it concerning himself and says, I have finished my course. The word course dramas is a race course. Hippodrome. Hippodrome is the word we get from it. I have finished. That's the word. Tell us or tell us that gives us the word perfect. He didn't say he was perfect in our sense of the word. He said I'm perfect in this sense that I not only started, but I finished. So now we are coming back to the Epistle, to the Colossians, and we are going to see some of that teaching embedded in that epistle.

[00:06:18] So you will discover now that there is a most definite balance of teaching. I ask you to cast your eye for a moment at the structure which you have in front of you and you will see these items. Here we have under the letter D, verse 23, right through to two, Chapter two, verse one. And then among other things, that's the bulk of the passage. But among other things, we have aligned present perfect. The word agonize and the place Laodicea. Now we come down to the other end in chapter four, verses 2 to 13. We have these words repeated the word, the mystery manifested and affliction and bonds. And then we have stand perfect. The word agonize the word. Laodicea Well, that of itself is enough to those who believe God's word to be true, to say, you see, let's put like that on purpose. Now let's see the passage, shall we? Colossians one. He is finished up in verse 27 by saying Christ in you, the hope of glory. Now, he says, whom we preach. That's a characteristic thought of the apostle. Not. I preach about him, but I preach him. It was the very first word used of his commission. That I might preach him among the Gentiles. Whom we preach warning everyman. Now, the moment you read the word warning, you're not on the ground of grace, sheer grace.

[00:08:05] You're on the ground of responsibility. No good warning a person who's dead. But he is alive. Yes. So now the apostle is speaking to these believers from another angle, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom. So this means not only warning them about something to avoid, but teaching them positively something to do. And as a consequence, he says that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Now, you see, unless we see what the man's after, we may get a little bit out of joint here, but I must go on. First of all. A verse 29 Whereunto I also labor striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. For I would not ag knew what great conflict I have for you this great conflict. And for them at Laodicea. So we have the word to agonize with his striving and his conflict in this passage. Now let's get the parallel, shall we? Chapter four. Verse 12. Epaphras Who is one of you? A servant of Christ, saluted you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, is the same expression agonizing? That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis. So even the accidental reference to Laodicea comes in its exact spot and its right place.

[00:09:51] Now will you turn to chapter one? A little earlier than we looked at just now. Verse seven, as he also learned of Epaphras, who is the same man at the beginning.

Our dear fellow servant. Who is for you, a faithful minister of Christ. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. So here's another one. Who's here in in this first chapter, standing for this truth. And in the fourth chapter, he's sharing with the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Notice the sharing of the ministry. Epaphus is praying. What for? That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Paul is warning and teaching. What for That you may be presented. Perfect. See, one man is preaching and the other man is praying. And possibly they are both getting on with their job better because they are doing that. Because if both of them were preaching. That which is brought about by prayer would be absent. And if both of them were praying, well, the poor man who ought to have heard the message wouldn't hear it. Oh, what a need there is for us to look up to the Lord and say, what wouldst thou have me to do and do it. Now, I have a great feeling with the Apostle Paul. He was a man of prayer. He was praying constantly. But he very seldom attended a prayer meeting friends and any amount of time he he'd be more like Nehemiah, who prayed and spoke at the same minute.

[00:11:37] I don't think he had time to go away and spend hours on his knees. He was praying, but oh, how glad he was that others had an opportunity sometimes to remember him. I like to think I was told once. Early days in pruning a fruit tree. You know, when you first start, you get your book of gardening out and you look at the tree in the picture and you look at yours in the garden and they don't look alike. It's like the young married man. His wife said to him, Well, what are you hesitating for? Well, he got his knife and fork in his hand and he got a joint, but he said there's no dotted lines on it. You know where you start carving. But this was one of the rules. The instructor said to me, Now forget the whole tree. Think only of that one branch. Now, then, every piece on that one branch is either to bear fruit or to be a leader. And you can't be both friends. You can't have the fruit of a quiet, pious life and be a leader like the Apostle Paul. The other people will see you don't get a very quiet life. Beaten, shipwrecked, starved, floating about in. Oh, dear, dear, dear. He is a leader. So he says, I pray constantly, but always as you pray for me that I'm open my mouth as I should.

[00:12:58] Oh, what a coordination is he. So here we have these two men, Paul and Epaphras. They are both on the same object, but they're approaching it in two different ways. And they're both right. So Paul says, I'm warning, I'm teaching Epaphras is praying. And the one thing in front of us is that there may be complete and perfect. Well, now the next thing is this. In this same chapter, verse 22, we have these words. In the

body of his flesh through death. Now, this isn't preachy and it isn't praying. This is sacrifice and the shedding of blood. This is deeper. Still in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unblamable and unretrievable in his sight. Now, that's the first presentation. And yet you may say the ink is hardly dry that the Apostle used when he wrote verse 22, when he says, And I want to present every man perfect. But you say, Paul, can you improve on this wonderful presentation? Improve? He says No. Oh, you're using the word perfect like some of you people do in English. Always says, I'm not using it like that. No, there's no interference with these. These two. They work together. Now, look back again at the presentation that comes through the work of Christ. Holy. That's a word we hardly like to use of ourselves. And rightly so.

[00:14:35] We don't hesitate sometimes to say we believe we are right. The to be to always maintain that we are holy in the sight of God is to have seen very deep into the counsels of the Almighty and realized the basis upon which all our hopes rest before we can say that we can say it. But we know it doesn't rest upon any attainment of our own. But solely upon that sacrificial work of Christ, we are sanctified, as it says in another epistle, by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, or as in the epistle to the Corinthians, that He has been made. He has been made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification as well as redemption that's ours. So he says Unblamable Now these two words that follow in verse 22 subdivide the word holy. Easter present you Holy. That is to say, Unblamable and Unremovable. Now, what's the difference between those two? On the surface, they look the same, don't they? But there's no vain repetition in the word of God. The word unblamable means without blemish. And if you know your Bible, you know that that refers to the priest. And the sacrifice. The. The sacrifice must be without blemish. You couldn't say at the last minute, I'll run this little old lamb up for the Passover because it's a bit off. It's got to be kept up for five days and examined. God knew the heart of man.

[00:16:05] That which was a type of Christ must be perfect. There must be nothing superfluous. There must be nothing lacking, just perfect without blemish. That's our position. Friends in Christ equivalent to the Temple Standard. And then the word Unretrievable gives us that majestic word in Romans. The eighth chapter. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? That's the police court word. So in the law court and in the temple, we stand perfectly accepted in Christ. Now, then, an ordinary reader. Of course, we are all extraordinary readers, aren't we? But an ordinary reader who

reads of that perfect acceptance, that double acceptance in verse 22 might even charge. The Apostle Paul is uncertain about the temerity to say, and he wants to go on to present every man perfect. But you know what he means now. Don't you always say it's one thing to be presented to be looking forward to that presentation in Christ. It's another thing for you to, in any measure, shape up to it. So just as he said in Corinthians, there was this distinction between the right and the wrong, between darkness and light, between the temple of God and idols. Yet nevertheless, he said, Don't rest like that, but you now you seek to cleanse yourself, perfecting taking to its legitimate conclusion, perfecting holiness in the sight of God. So now you see, the Apostle has that in mind. Whom we preach warning, teaching.

[00:17:43] Now what is he going to warn about? Well, if you look at the second chapter, verse eight, beware, verse 18, let no beguile you. All the plenty of traps, plenty of snares. And these people were open to invasion of these things. In the earlier epistles of Paul like Galatians, the trap and the snare was to go back to circumcision and putting themselves under the law of Mount Sinai in order to sort of make assurance double. Sure. And the apostle swept it aside and said, if you put yourself under law, Christ shall profit you nothing. When we reach Colossians, there's still a mingling of legalism, but now they're getting mixed up with the more Asiatic. The philosophy sides coming in. And again, he says, beware, lest any man make a spoil of you through a vain, deceitful philosophy. Our version puts it philosophy and vain deceit. If philosophy is true. Well, it's true. But he says there's a good deal that goes for philosophy, which is a vain, deceitful teaching. And after the tradition of men. For after the rudiments of the world. Well, how shall I know what he says? You need not make a study of philosophy and then start all over again and worry yourself about the traditions of men. And then start all over again, wasting time about the rudiments of the world. Just ask one question. Where does Christ come in it? That's the answer and not after Christ.

[00:19:23] If you go a little bit further down this chapter, the same thing, verse 16, Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a holy day or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days. Why are there shadows? Where does Christ come in? All the reality is Christ there. The word body is opposed to the word shadow. Let no man be guide you of your reward. Verse 19. And not holding the head once again, somebody might interrupt this meeting and say, And what does it mean to be a voluntary humility? What does it mean by intruding into those things which he hath not seen? What does it

mean? Vain? Be puffed up by fleshly, my friend. Don't you worry about that. You take the other side not holding the head. That's it. You see? You've got enough there in the philosophy, the traditions, the rudiments, the vain intrusions to so occupy your mind and thought that you'll be an old person dead and buried before you realize the glories of your calling. Just the one question Where does Christ come in? Answers it. And you know, friends, I have to read books like that sometimes. I haven't read all the books that have been sent to me and given to me or that I had on my shelves, because occasionally I had to refer to something. But when I first received that book, I got the index and I got down the word atonement and the word, and that was enough for me.

[00:20:57] If they said certain things about those vital things and concern the person of Christ, I knew more or less what to expect. Either way, good or bad. Well, here we have then. One presentation. The presentation as a result of Christ's finished work, which nothing can interfere with, and the presentation over and above that which the Apostle had in mind. Now what can be over and above? Well, this is coming to another aspect of truth over and above. Salvation as a gift is the reward of faithful service. Isn't there? You remember that Ephesians gives you the basis and Philippians gives you the prize. Or to put it in Ephesians, it's the hope of the calling. And in Philippians it's the prize of the calling. Now there's no if about the hope of the calling. If any believer belongs to any one particular calling, whatever is the hope of that calling is his by purchase of the blood of Christ. He can't miss it if he wants to. Yet when you come to the Apostle Paul's own statement about himself in Philippians three, he's putting a lot of ifs in. Shall we see that? Of course. I know this is old ground with some of you, but it may be new ground for some who are listening. So I dare not apologize and say, well, we'll pass by like the priest and the Levite on the other side will come and see.

[00:22:23] Philippians Chapter three. What? Verse ten. That I may know him. Now, he doesn't say, I want to know the proof of his resurrection as an historic fact. I want to know how the body was taken from the tomb and who did it. No, no, he says. That's all right. That's finished with me that I may know him. And the power of it. The power of his resurrection. And the fellowship of his sufferings. And I think those that must be always the order for me to dare to venture, to share the sufferings of Christ without the power of His resurrection is just spiritual suicide. Couldn't do it. But if I know the power of the risen Christ, then I may even volunteer to stand where He stood in this world to be treated like he was treated, to be despised and rejected, if needs be. To have the best I

can give man thrown back in his face. But I couldn't stand it apart from him. So he says that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. And he goes deeper. Being made conformable unto his death. I'd like you to notice that in verse 21, he uses that word conformable again. Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body? He says, My poor old body may be conformable unto his death down here, but always, as I'm carrying with me this blessed thought that I can do what they like with me here.

[00:23:57] They can't alter the fact that it's going to be made eventually conformable unto the body of his glory. That's the power of his resurrection. And if you doubt it. According to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. So the apostle was hitched on to something, wasn't he? I've heard somebody singing Hitch your wagon to a star or something. Well, I each mine to something even more wonderful to the risen Christ. Now, then, what's this all leading to? If by any means, I might attain unto the resurrection that which is out from among the dead. In some versions, there's one word out. Some versions there's two. This is not ordinary resurrection. This is parallel with the words of Hebrews. They did this that they may have to obtain a better resurrection. Well, if there's a better resurrection, there's one that's not so good. So what's all this mean? Let's go on. All this is not as though I had already attained. I haven't got there either. Were already perfect. Paul, if you were not perfect with the time you wrote Philippians, what hope is there for us all? But he says, You don't think I mean, that I'm a good man and I'm getting better and better? No, no, he said, No.

[00:25:16] I'm dealing with this idea of a prize and a running, and I've got the Greek sports, which you know all about as my figure. He uses it very consistently in one Corinthians. He says that those that run in a race run all but one receiveth a prize so run that you may obtain. And so he says here. Not as though I had already attained either were already perfect. So that means to say equivalent to attaining. But I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But is one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind. And this man knew the history of his ancient people. You know, they came out of Egypt. They crossed the Red Sea. They went into the wilderness and they never read the poem, which was not written in their day. But they could have quoted it or somebody quoted them. The distance lends enchantment to the view. When they were in Egypt, they side by reason of their bondage and all the affliction that they endured when they

were the other side of the Red Sea. They got, shall I say, and I think I'm translating the Hebrew word correctly, they got fed up with the manna. That was the gift of God. And they said, there's nothing to eat but this.

[00:26:41] That's what it says. Nothing to eat, but. This. We remember the onion and the garlic and the fish that we did eat in Egypt freely. Oh, dear. All the tasty bits. Onion, garlic. See? Smelly bits, fish. We come out of the world and red sees between us. Is there anybody in this congregation or listening to me who have never stood on the other side of your Red Sea and looked across and said, I've given up a tremendous lot. It's pretty flat going now. A wilderness is flat going, friends. The manor was a flat tasting stuff. I didn't have very much else to help it out. They had their water assured and their bread, and that's about all. That's a wilderness journey. The best is waiting for us. And in the very same book, the Book of Numbers, in exactly the same spot. When you get your structure, you've got the pomegranate and the grapes and the other fruits that were waiting for them over the other side. So they had to walk by faith and keep that in mind. Now then, here we have the apostle. Forgetting those things which are behind. You see, these people didn't forget them. They carried them in their mind and it took them back in heart to Egypt. And some of them died in the wilderness as a result. And reaching forth unto those things which are before I press toward the mark.

[00:28:10] According press, toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And then he says, Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect. Better still. Let us therefore as many as would be perfect, be thus minded and so on. He's addressing those who would follow on with himself. Well, here's the man who uses the word perfect the same in the same context and the same meaning that he brings it over to Colossians. And here we have another point perhaps to keep us keep in our minds. Ephesians is practically all the way through consistently teaching one thing, giving you the revelation of the new calling without a lot of additions. Philippians is a one thing, a one subject epistle. It's mainly to do with working out the salvation, not the salvation itself. But Colossians comes along and gives you in a summary form the teaching of Ephesians about the prisoner, about the mystery, about the body, about the members. But it also gives you the prize of the high calling of Philippians because you've got the prize here. And in Colossians two verse 18, we have the self-same word that is translated prize in Philippians. In case anybody missed it before, I'll give you this. Let no man beguile you.

Now, it's not an ordinary beginning. It's teaching you of a prize. I'll give you the word for prize. Grab iron B grab. That's the root of the word.

[00:29:41] I can't tell you why, but iron is a price cutter. Brad Buo is the judge against you with regard to the prize, its some influence at the elbow of the umpire who when you touch the tape, he says no, let no man cheat you in this running and he will if he can this evil one and Satan knows his limitations. Friends right back in the days of Jobe, the first book of the Bible, God said, you can touch all that he possesses, but you can't touch his life. Friends. Satan never wasted his time trying to rob you of your life in Christ. But he can't. Your life is hid with Christ in God, but he'll rob you of your reward. He'll cheat the Son of God, of a crown that you could lay at his feet if he can. So it's good to be enlightened as to where the attack comes, isn't it? Well, now we come back to Colossians and we find that there's another aspect of this truth waiting for us in chapter one. We have in verse 12 these words. Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet. There's no doubt about it. The word means to be completely fitted for any particular occasion. Whatever will be demanded of us in glory is already ours in Christ. We need have no shrinking fear and say, Oh, I wouldn't like to go there with angels and principalities all around me.

[00:31:12] I should feel out of it. No you won't. Friends for you'll not be out of it. You'll be in Christ. And the complete provision made for you. Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Now you say, Have you got something you're going to add to that? Oh, yes, you have. Well, I'm going to add to that all. We come to chapter three. And chapter three. It doesn't take so long to speak about wives and husbands and children and fathers and servants and masters. But he does you know, Ephesians gives you a whole chapter and a good piece afterwards. Colossians, as I said, says the same thing, but crams it into a smaller space where we're not concerned for the moment about wives and husbands, children and fathers, but we are concerned of what it says about the servants. And I notice that the apostle has more than once use the word servant or a slave to tack on some of the most glorious teaching there is. He doesn't tack it on to the wife and the husband only, and they have an opportunity to manifest to angels and to men the relationship of the church with the Lord, as he says. But here the servants are picked out, particularly servants obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers because these people are be everlastingly causing these tracks, wouldn't

they? I mean, if anybody started to serve an earthly master not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God, what around there'd be.

[00:32:48] And I don't see what you could do about it. I've got no opinions about it, but I know this is a very high standard for, isn't it? And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. I wonder if that's how we serve. Just searching peace, isn't it? Knowing that of the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. Reward of the inheritance. It doesn't mean the inheritance is a reward. It's just the same as the prize of the high calling. The high calling isn't the prize the high calling as a hope attached to it, the high calling as an additional prize attached to it. The inheritance is yours because it's yours in Christ. But you are beguiled of the reward. Or you could win it. So is the additional bit. You will receive the reward of the inheritance. Now, some have objected. They said no, there's no such thing as forfeiture in the church of the one body. What in the apostle made a terrible mistake. Verse 25. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done. And there is no respect of persons.

[00:34:04] That's awkward, isn't it? But you see, he's not dealing with our salvation. He's not dealing with our membership of the body. He's not dealing with that meekness and fitness, which is already ours. We're still unblamable still unremovable in his sight in Christ. But he's looking outside for a minute and says, Now what have you done with it? And shall we even stoops to say, you know, God is not unmindful of the way in which you serve Him. He says even a cup of cold water given in his name should not go without a recognition. So it's not great and mighty things he's looking for, but all he is looking for some consistent response. So the whole of our meeting has been taken up with this one thought, isn't it? But don't you think it's worthwhile sometimes to get it? And some of you have heard it twice over today from another angle. Oh, what good people you will be if only you live up to it. Well, that's the trouble, isn't it? But the God who has given us this word is the God who stands behind it. And we who draw all we need for the forgiveness of sins and the hope of glory. We draw all our need from the same person who is the head of the body, the church, whatever it is that we are called upon to do for his sake. All sufficiency is there.

[00:35:27] Well, now, I don't think we can go much further. I just want to make sure there's not some point that I ought to give you before we close. I don't think there is. I felt that I must not slip these two passages and say, Well, we've had it before. Perhaps

we'll go on. I ask you to consider that embedded in this epistle, which so emphasizes our completeness because it does say, Oh, that's one thing I wanted to do. Yes. In Chapter two, in contrast with all the philosophy and tradition, he says in verse ten, Ye are complete in him. So you are complete Now the man is praying that you may stand perfect and complete. He said, But I am complete. So, yes, in Christ. But what about your response? What about the walk that's worthy? What about the desire to share with him? That's the other side. So we've got the two. And this this means to say that we have a balance in our teaching and we can be unbalanced in two directions. And that's what's happened in the church. There are some who so stressed the sovereignty and election of God that they're just sheer fatalists. Some of them have even said they never teach their children. They never preached to their children because if they're elect, they'll be saved. And if they're not, whatever you do, they'll be damned. I don't read that in the Scripture, do you? And on the other hand, there are some who've seen the exhortation to walk worthy, and they put that so great that they are shivering in their shoes because they know full well that every anything they've done will never be worthy of salvation.

[00:37:18] So there are those who are going about this world and saying nobody can be sure they're saved, whatever. Well, the scripture says you can. It all depends upon what the salvation is, resting the finished work of Christ and so on. But we need the two together. We need the glorious assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. And on the other hand, that I'm blessed by grace. We hold on to the Word of God and seek to translate it into daily practice. We shall not be as far along the road as we might be to the glory of him who loved us and died for us. That whether we sleep or whether we are awake. The meaning is whether we are sleeping or whether we are drowsy. We shall live together with him. Yes, but we may miss a little bit that we might have taken with us if we'd only be more watchful. So may the Lord be pleased to grant that this emphasis in Colossians, Philippians two Corinthians and Hebrews, among other passages which urge us to leave the word of the beginning and go on unto perfection may find an echo in our hearts and in our minds.