

W356_Colossians_16.mp3

[00:00:02] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open book, and it is number 16 and the closing study of the epistle to the Colossians. And now we've had before us this episode for quite a number of these meetings. And you know, the general distribution of subject matter places chapter two in the middle and the doctrine and the practice is arranged on either side. It differs from the Ephesians in this respect that while it speaks about Paul's prison ministry and speaks about the dispensation of the mystery and speaks about the Church of the One body and speaks about principality and power, all of those are already before us in Ephesians and the fullness of any great keyword, it goes over the ground more rapidly in order to give space to a word of warning that comes in Chapter two, Beware. And after that is done, it picks up the story again, focuses our attention upon the blessed hope that is in front of us, speaks of the new man, and then impinges upon domestic life, business life and the final walk that is worthy. It's not possible for us to go over the ground again, although it might be profitable because of time and space. You notice that? Uh, just exactly the same as in Ephesians Chapter five and chapter six speaks of the relationship of wife and husband of children and fathers, of servants and masters. So the apostle does it again here.

[00:01:45] It's a standing witness that the high truth of Ephesians and Colossians, which speaks about heavenly places and far above all where Christ sits as not God. So sort of as a person may put it, such a heavenly mind that there are no earthly use this truth if it seed in heart comes right into your very home and is connected with your relationships down here. That's as it should be. It's a it's a standing disgrace when any one can say to anybody or of any company that they are teaching is one thing, but their manner of life is another. And here we have it being brought together here. But he uses very short speech here with regard to wives and husbands in the Ephesians. He enlarges upon it. In both cases, it's fathers who bring up their children. In the estimate of the apostle Paul, that was his responsibility. A modern life as robbed a child of one of its parents. A good many children only know there's somebody about the house who's called father, who goes out early in the morning and comes back late at night and is told if that child is naughty. When a mother love is immediate now feeding, clothing, cosseting protecting and father love is one that looks down the years and says, And what's he going to be like in 20 years time? And if a child has both, he grows up straight. If he has one only, whichever it is, he'll go crooked.

[00:03:24] Well, that's what's happening with regard to so many of our young people. The home life has gone and they are the result. Well, if we are believers in Christ, that should never be said of us. Although, of course, we are not in any measure perfect in any sense, but we do have a wonderful, perfect position in Christ that should influence our frailty. Down here, I draw your attention, as we have before, that when he speaks to servants in verse 22 of the preceding chapter, that is the longest piece. He dismisses husbands and wives and children and fathers and masters rather quickly, but he says to the servants. Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God. And whatsoever you do do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance for ye serve the Lord Christ. This is in harmony with the general balance of the teaching of Colossians, because in chapter one he spoke about an inheritance which was by no means a reward, which was a sheer gift. Will you look, just to refresh your memory of chapter one, verse 12? Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet. Now I've never made myself meet. And you never can.

[00:04:50] I've heard some people speaking about another person as a self-made man, and some people say, Well, he looks like it. But we're not self-made men or self-made women in this. This is the work of grace and God. He hath made us meet. What for? To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. That's complete fitness for it. But when you come to the practical outworking, the servant is told that it is not only a fitness for the inheritance, which is by grace and gift, but there's a reward attached to the inheritance which he may win or lose. So there are two distinct doctrines that work side by side in Paul's ministry. Ephesians stresses the hope of the calling, and Philippians picks it up and says there's also a prize of the high calling. Now the hope can never be forfeited. It's a gift. But even Paul says not as have are already perfect. But one thing I do, I forget the things which are behind and reach forth unto the things which are before I press according to my heart, for the prize of the high calling of God. You see. So they're all in this express, perhaps tersely, about indicating that that's a line of truth. Well, we come now to chapter four and. He speaks about prayer as he does at the end of Ephesians. This man is a man of prayer, and yet he was so busy that he was travelling, packing, speaking care of all the churches coming upon him that I'm perfectly certain he couldn't spend hours in private meditation.

[00:06:23] He couldn't spend hours in his own room. In quiet prayer. I think it was an exceedingly pressed man. And isn't it good to know that prayer isn't the length? And of the petition it had it brought from the heart. I suppose the shortest prayer on record is in the book of Nehemiah when he was addressed by the King, because he looked rather grave in his presence. And the King said, Why is your countenance sad? And he says, And I prayed to God, and I said to the king, quick as that. But that prayer was an effective one. It was heard. So we're not heard for their much speaking. But he says, here, pray for us. This is the mighty apostle who had all the gifts that could be given to a man. He was he was an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher all rolled in one. And yet after he received this wonderful revelation to pass on to others. He didn't feel he was stooping when he said, Did you pray for me? And what did he want? Well, I don't know how you feel, but I'm sure if I were in prison, one of the things I should be all the time about is, oh, Lord, when am I going to be set free? I've got a horror of in prison that I was everlastingly in trouble when I lived in the country because I let birds free and let goats free and then wished I hadn't got them.

[00:07:49] Freedom. And he is a man. If ever there was a champion of liberty in the scripture, it's the Apostle Paul. Stand fast in the liberty where with Christ hath made you free. So he is in prison of all places, on Earth. So he's praying. What does he pray? Oh, he said, Pray for me, for us, that God would open unto us a door. Supposing you stop there. What sort of door? You know, he's forgotten for the moment about prison, although he says all that God would open a door. He's concerned about the word of God. You'll find he says that again in Second Timothy in his last epistle. He says, I suppose an evildoer and two bonds. He says the word of God is not bound. Is he like that? That's the one thing that he was concerned about. So his prayer was for an open door of utterance. It was a figure that he was used in more places than one. This door of utterance. That I may speak as I ought to speak. Supposing we see the other references to the door of utterance. One Corinthians, chapter 16, verse nine, so that we see what was in his mind. He used this before. One Corinthians, Chapter 16.

[00:09:13] He's on his way. Is coming from from Ephesus. He's hoping to arrive at Pentecost or stay there till Pentecost. And then he says in verse nine, for a great door and effectual is opened unto me. So the reason why he was caddying and why he was staying at that place was because of the opportunity that he saw for witness. But notice what else he says. For a great door, ineffectual is open unto me. And there are many

adversaries. Well, I think that's the characteristic of this world, isn't it? God opens a door for the Ministry of the Word. That the Scripture is true, that from Genesis to Revelation, there's a mighty spiritual foe whose great antagonism is against the witness to Christ and the Word of God. And that antagonist knows his job and he has no hesitation. So whenever there's an open door for witness, we ought to be prepared immediately to know that the adversary will have his men there, too. Not that we ought to be intimidated and always looking around corners, but not to be surprised or wonder that it should take place. The marvel is we're permitted to go on as we are knowing the activity of that foe. So there's the figure he uses there. And in the second Corinthians, he picks it up again in chapter two. In chapter two, he says in verse 12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas and remembered, Troas is the troy of ancient classic Greek.

[00:10:52] When I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, a door was opened unto me of the Lord. So again, he uses that figure. Here it is the third time in Colossians. This time he's in prison. But the one thing that concerns him is that the door of utterance should be given to him. And then he says to speak the mystery of Christ. Now, of course. Some people would give Paul a lecture and say, the only thing you ought to be concerned about is the saving of souls. Paul. Well, nobody can accuse the Apostle Paul of not preaching the gospel. But it was laid upon him. To be the mouthpiece of the risen Christ. To make known some peculiar part of God's will, which is called a secret, or in our version, a mystery. And he would have been unfaithful if he said no, I'm not concerned about that. All I'm going to do is to win souls for Christ. We have had no right to choose our own work. The only thing we can do is to look to the Lord and use the prayer of the apostles on the road of Damascus. When he said, Lord, what will thou have me to do? And here the apostles in his prison, with a door of utterance before him, is seeking to speak the mystery of Christ. He says in this very epistle that the dispensation of the mystery was granted unto him as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles.

[00:12:26] And it's evidently a part of God's ordained purpose that that secret should be made known. And we are not helping out the purpose of God if we choose otherwise. Of course, everybody hasn't got it laid upon them to do this. Man had. And it's good to see that although he was criticized and judged, he said, you know, I don't judge myself. He said, I'm not conscious of anything wrong at the moment about myself, but that doesn't justify me. He that judges me is the Lord as the finest thing to do for him. Whenever you

come up against this attitude. And then. He uses another word which is so frequently in the lips of some of our friends. That I may make it manifest. As I ought to speak. It's a word ought. Have you got folks that you know who all was everlastingly telling you what you ought to do and where you ought to go and where you ought not to go? Well, if you read the writings of the apostle Paul, he uses the word ought about himself. And then sometimes about others in this same context. It goes on to say. Um, verse six Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. You know I can tolerate ought from a man like that who says I ought as well.

[00:13:55] He's setting the example. So now he can use it. But in most cases, we have no right to be chasing other people about and telling them what they ought to do. Our responsibility is to point to the Word of God and to the person of Christ and leave the Word of God to do its work. And it will do it far more effectively than when we rub people up the wrong way. But of course our rough shod methods. So there we have the beginning of this outworking of truth in chapter four. The speech which is savoured with salt, is of course just saying the same as he said in the other epistle. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is still edifying. The reference to salt was was of course. But right back in the Old Testament, salt was used with covenant and sacrifice and it was a symbol of that which was anti corruption. And, you know, the power of the tongue and the words we use can be insidious. It can be dropping poison into the minds of people. So he says, don't let that be a characteristic of yours. As I've said before, in this place, I have a funny bone, although I may not look like it. I have any amount of bits in the back of my mind that are screamingly funny.

[00:15:21] And I don't mind saying them. But I'm asking you, as believers in Christ, if you know any funny jokes about the Bible, you sit mute and look like a fool rather than say them. Because once you start, you start something going that you can't stop. Let your speech be always with grace. Seasoned with salt. Now, he says in this. Chapter. More than once. The he used his expression, Let us do something. Will you notice in chapter two, 16 and 18, he says, after having gone through the. Very intricate passage, he says in chapter 216. Let no man therefore judge you. He says in verse 18, Let no man begin you. He says in chapter 315 and let the peace of God at the umpire in your hearts rule, that is. He says also in verse 16, Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. And in chapter 416, he says, Let, uh. It says, And when this epistle is read among you

cause that it be read, cause that it be read, let it be read. This word let is very characteristic of the apostle. And I just want to make a detour for a moment. One of the best episodes to go to receive its line of argument and basis is the one epistle to the Hebrews. So if you'll turn aside for a moment, this is just in passing, but it's useful. Chapter four of Hebrews. Chapter four of Hebrews.

[00:17:17] Verse 14. Seeing then that we have and verse 15, for we have not. Verse 16, let us. Therefore you see the argument We have something. Let us then have something. We have an high priest that is passed into the heavens. Jesus, the Son of God. We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace. The exhortation let us is based upon that solid fact that we have someone at the right hand of God on our account and also in verse chapter. Um, that's chapter four. In chapter four, verse one I ought to have looked at first. He says, Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest. Any of you should seem to come short of it. This is based upon the preceding chapter where he's been referring to Israel in the wilderness and the way they came short, and some of their carcasses fell in the wilderness instead of going into the land of promise. And in verse 11. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the example, say same example of unbelief, let us. And then chapter six, which is one of the focal points of Hebrews, therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ. It's a terrible thing to tell anybody to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ.

[00:18:52] The margin is correct. Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ. Let us go on unto perfection. Let us go on. And again, the emphasis in. Turn to Chapter ten. A lot of argument. Chapter ten, verse 22, or it says having in verse 19, having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus and by a new and living way and having a high priest over the house of God. Let us verse 22, Let us draw near. Let us verse 23. Let us hold fast. Let us verse 24. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and a good works. Let us let us based upon that solid fact, you see. And we might as well finish it now. Chapter 12, verse one. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight. And then in chapter 12:28, wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. And then in Chapter 13, let brotherly love continue First verse. And verse

five, Let your conversation be without covetousness and be content with such things as ye have. For he hath said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. And then verse 13, let us go forth, therefore unto him without the camp. And finally in verse 15 by him.

[00:20:40] Therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise. Isn't that a consistent way? Never urge anybody to practice without a basis. The basis. Is there having a high priest. Let us draw near having the new and living way. Let us do this. Having these gifts. Let us render but not otherwise. Let us. Let us. Let us. And so we find he does that consistently. Well, now there are other features that we must just take in this closing study of this chapter four of Colossians, and we'll be back again. And now he says. All my state. Verse him All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you who is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant. All my state. You remember at the end of Ephesians, he says. Verse 21, but that ye may also 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, this is an aspect that is not very high, but it's very real. You know, there is a tendency, there is a possibility that we may be so taken up with the high and the holy and the awful elements of redemption and grace and glory as to forget. What the apostle is seeking to emphasize, that it comes right down to hearth and home.

[00:22:24] He has no hesitation in using Tychicus, a beloved brother and a faithful minister and a fellow servant of the Lord, just as I all my affairs and how I do. And then for him to come back again and tell me all your affairs and how you do. Of course I know we go up to somebody say, How are you? And if they say, Oh, I wish I hadn't said it because you get a yard long description of all the sufferings and the illnesses they've been through and hoped to go through. That's a convention. I mean, if we're if we're just decently brought up, we don't bother. They say, how are you? Say, how are you? That's the end of it. But this man isn't doing it casually. This is a part of his ministry. All your affairs is a part of the apostle's concern. Even though he's in prison, can't do anything. And you and I should have some little element like that about us. We're not betraying the truth because we're not everlastingly speaking about the mystery and everlastingly saying heavenly places we are. We are giving an exhibition of the truth because we are concerned, because, you see, our relationship is described in these epistles as members of a body. Fellow members of a body. And we're assured that if one member

suffers, all suffer. We are linked together through Christ our head. So we a strange thing if we were not concerned.

[00:23:47] So here it is. I have made you before. But I made you again. That I remember reading once that some ladies who were missionaries in India were overjoyed when they received one particular letter from home. And of course, every one of us would immediately expect that they had some wonderful revelation of truth, some marvelous visitation of grace, and all that made them joy was the mother at last had bought a special broom that helped her to sweep the room and the and the hearth a bit more effectively. We said, Oh, what a comedown. No. Wow. Fine. To think that in spite of all the wonderful things that were up against and doing, they could still be concerned about that home and the little details that brought it back to their hearts and lives. So now don't start overwhelming one another, friends, and just go the opposite stream and busy bodying about all that affairs and all how you do. But let's have this moderation and let's remember that we are living in a world of distraction where there's much that makes irritation and just a word of comfort. A word of sympathy once now and again is entirely in harmony with our high calling. Well, now, that makes me also remember. The emphasis here in chapter four, verse eight, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose that he might know your estate and comfort your hearts.

[00:25:12] Now, would you look back at chapter two? Chapter two. For I would that he knew what great conflict I had for you and for them earlier this year, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh that their hearts might be comforted. You see, he is still on it, but now he's not talking about whether you've got a broom to sweep the hearth. He's. He's right on the subject this time. But it doesn't stop the man from being concerned about little details that their hearts might be comforted. Being knit together in love and unto all the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That's high doctrine for you. And yet same word. Isn't it fine to think that one person may be carrying on like I am from a pulpit and another person may be visiting somebody in their home and they're both comforting the heart. And, you know, God himself has done that. When you get halfway through the book of Isaiah with all their rebellion and all the chastisement they've been through. Comfort ye, comfort my people, speak ye comfortably in the margin, says speaking to

the heart. See? Comfort your heart. And what are we dealing with? The word comfort. Let's take it a stage further.

[00:26:37] It doesn't mean soothing. We use the word a comfort and a comforter or soothing a little baby. The spirit of truth is said to be a comforter. But the word paraclete has no idea of consolation. Para means alongside Kaleo means to call, and it means whenever you're in trouble, he's there. If you'll call him, he doesn't interfere. God doesn't everlastingly take the work out of your hands and do it. He's there always when you feel the necessity. And don't forget that the spirit of God is another comforter, and that implies that Christ is one. And that's the very word translated advocate in the first epistle of John. We have an advocate with the father. That's the word paraclete. That's the word comfort. And when you look at our English word comfort, it doesn't mean consolation. Crm is the sun coming into English letters, meaning together with and fort means to strengthen and strengthen anybody. Fort Comfort Strengthen. So you're doing a far more than soothing somebody. You're giving them, as it were, encouragement and strength. Well, then we come a little further in this epistle, like in most of his epistles. Paul is very, very concerned. About the names of those who were his helpers. It's a part of inspired truth that you should endure sometimes. A long list of names. I suppose the longest list of those that come at the end of Romans if you just won't read them all, but just glimpse to see the character of the Apostle Paul.

[00:28:17] The end of the Epistle to the Romans. That's the 16th chapter. Now look at this list. In the 16th chapter, he starts with, say, pick it up at Priscilla and Aquila in three. And then there is Mary in six, and there's Andronicus and Junia in seven and Ampelius and Urbain and Statius and Apelles and Astarte all look at them, all their names going in. And I'm sure the Apostle was careful to think round and not leave somebody out. You know, it's a sad thing, isn't it, when you suddenly wake up to the fact that you put so-and-so's name in and you've left somebody's name out. That can be harmful, can't it? So here again, it was very lonely, isn't it? But it's service, isn't it? So here in coming back to Colossians, he says Onissimus. And he never just says Onissimus. He says he's a faithful and beloved brother who is one of you. He gives every possible credit he can. This man. And Aristarchus. Who is he? My fellow prisoner. And Marcus? Who is he? Sister Santa Barnabas. And then brackets touching whom you receive commandments. If he come unto you, receive him. I want to stop here. How's his name

coming to the story? Where does he come first? In the story? In the book of the acts. In the 15th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas had been sent.

[00:29:57] Or we're going to be sent to take the decrees that have been passed by the Jerusalem Council to the churches. And then. The Apostle Paul said. We let us go and visit the churches that we've visited before. And Barnabas, who had been with him before, insisted that Mark should go with him. Now. I think it was rather an awkward thing for a man like Peter to insist on anything to a man like Paul that was asking for trouble. And Paul said to Barnabas, your nephew Mark. He turned back when we started on that very journey and went, Not with us. We can't possibly take that man. Now, that seems hard, doesn't it? But you see, the service of God comes first. And whether you upset somebody comes second. In this case. And they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus and goes practically out of the Scriptures. And Paul took Timothy, that was overruled. But now, instead of saying that was the end of Mark, that's a finisher, Mark. This man says. Touching whom you receive commandments. If he come unto. If he come unto, you receive him. So this is the Santa to Barnabas who was not not allowed to go with the apostle. He's coming back again. And if you turn to two, Timothy. Chapter four. We shall have to turn to it at the moment. So I will turn to it now.

[00:31:31] You'll see him there. Chapter four. Verse ten. Demas hath forsaken me. Have enough this present world and is departed unto Thessalonica Chrétiens de Galatia Titus unto the Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me now. Luke is mentioned in Colossians four. Take Mark, Here he comes and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry. So Mark, the one that turned tail and fled is back. Now, what about DNS? He's mentioned in chapter four of Colossians, isn't he? Yes. And Luke? Yes. Look at verse 14 of chapter four. Luke, the beloved physician. Who did he send? Loyal. Did he stick it right through? He did. In the last Epistle, Paul wrote in view of his approaching death, he said, Only Luke is with me. There's Luke. But what about. In verse 14 of Colossians four, Luke the beloved physician and Demas. Now he's the only one who hasn't got a title. He's not called Beloved, He's not called Faithful. He's not called useful. He's just called Demas the Man. Paul couldn't say a word of praise about this man, but he says nothing. And the very omission is ominous, isn't it? He couldn't say anything about it. He saw the work already going on. Demas and Demas. The next epistle is Demas hath forsaken me. So we've got all these characteristics in these folks

that were assembled together, met together and went in different ways, serving the same Lord and being thus picked out by the Apostle Paul.

[00:33:25] They were not all cast into one mold. They had all sorts of characteristics. In fact, he divides them into two parts. There were those of the circumcision and those who were of you. The Colossians were Gentiles, so they had Jewish helpers and gentile helpers together in this ministry. But each one was serving the Lord according to his light. Now, if Epaphras in verse 12 is particularly picked out because he has come into the story before verse 12, Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluted you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Now there's a man praying that these saints may stand perfect and complete. Will you look back into the Colossian epistle? You'll find Epaphras is in verse seven of chapter one. As he also learned of Epaphras, our dear fellow servant who is for you, a faithful minister of Christ, who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. That's where He first comes in. Now, the apostle's own statement at the end of Chapter one. Verse 28. Whom we preach warning every man. Now, when you warn anybody, there's a danger and the danger is enlarged upon in chapter two. Beware, lest any man beguile you. Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

[00:35:02] So Epaphras is praying along the same lines as Paul's ministry. One is speaking and the other is praying, and they're both converging on the same thing. So here again, you see ministry can be divided. At first it looks as they were doing something very different, but they were standing by each other. And although I've said it over and over again, it must be understood that the word perfect as used by the Apostles in these epistles, doesn't mean improvement. It's the word that's entered into common use in the word. Kelly Television and telegram and telescope and telephone. And the common denominator is not something perfect. I don't think any of us will pick up the telephone and say it's perfect or the television was perfect, what I've seen of some of them or listened. But it means you're dealing with a distance. Kelly means end. And a telephone and a telegram and a telescope is speaking at a distance or writing at a distance or or whatever it may be, listening to a distance and so on. It's a very word used by Christ on the Cross when he said It is finished. It's the very word used by Paul in two Timothy, I have finished my course and the word perfect doesn't mean getting better and better, but it means touching the tape at the end. Not merely starting, but

finishing. Now, could you understand why the apostle in Colossians four suddenly stops at verse 17 and says.

[00:36:38] And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord that thou finish it. Fulfill it. Complete it. Perfect it. He said, look at these others. The one I complained about. He didn't go to the end. He got turned aside. So there's a tremendous insistence in Paul's witness that it's one thing to start. It's another thing to stay the course and be able to say, like he did at the end. He might have said, Well, Nero thinks he's got the upper hand of me. Nero is going to lead me out to execution presently. And that's not a very pleasant prospect for anybody. He's got any sense. But he never bothered about that. He said that by me the ministry might be fulfilled and all the Gentiles shall hear. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth. A crown as the idea. And this idea of completing is expressed by him in chapter one, when he is dealing with the Scriptures in his own ministry. Will you come back to refresh your memory there? He says in chapter one about himself in verse 23, The last words. I, Paul, am made a minister who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church.

[00:38:05] That's its title. Whereof I was made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you. Our version says to fulfill the Word of God, which would lead you to think that Paul's ministry has defined here, is fulfilling something that was said in the Old Testament. Well, that isn't so. For he declares, it was hid in God and never revealed to anybody in Old Testament or new until it was revealed to Paul as the prisoner had Jesus Christ that he should make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery. Ephesians three, Colossians one. So we have to translate the word fulfilled as we find it translated in the next chapter. Says in verse ten of the next chapter and ye are complete in him. That is the word here to complete the Word of God. Not to fulfill something that Isaiah said, but to complete the Word of God so that a person who knows the Old Testament and rejoices in the Gospel, according to Matthew and knows John 316 and understands the epistle to the Romans and goes no further in nevertheless as an incomplete Bible until he can put the top stone on the edifice of the crowning glory of the whole teaching of Scripture, the heavenly places in Christ, Christ is the head over all things to the church, over principality and power, not merely over

angels. This is the completion of the Word of God and makes the whole purpose of the ages rounded out to its most glorious end.

[00:39:40] Well, now we have this word, key word. We'll look at it in closing, because our time is almost up. It's one of the characteristic words of this man's ministry. In chapter one, verse nine. For this cause. We also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled. Feel he didn't want you to be half naked. Christians filled. And then if you look at verse 25, the one that we've just been touching, you're dealing with a filled full Bible complete and chapter two, verse ten. He says in verse eight, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. That word vain is empty. The original word for translated vain is empty and it's on purpose. It's put over against the word fool. He says all this is empty in comparison with what you get in Christ. And the Old Testament likens it to empty systems which contain no water when you could have access to living water. So he says vain deceit for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And again in chapter 412, which we have just been looking at. A prefers. Which one of you, a servant of Christ, saluted you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers that she may stand perfect and complete all the desire that they should go on and complete their growth.

[00:41:13] And finally, the exhortation to archippus. Now as a last word. But you say to me, you said you've got to have a last word just now. Well, that's apostolic because Paul writing to the Philippians says, Well, finally, brethren. And he says finally again in the next chapter. So you can't help sometimes these things. One more word which comes right at the very bottom of the page, verse 18, The salutation by the hand of me. Paul, remember my bonds a little pathetic. Remember my bonds as he picked up the pen to write his own signature? His wrist was chained to the century. The century was given time off, but Paul wasn't. He was chained to another one. And he almost feel the clink of the chain as he picked it up and said, Remember my bond? But it didn't make a lot about these bonds. He plays with the word in Ephesians. He says, I'm conducting an embassy in a chain. I'm an ambassador in bonds. And then he says. The salutation by the hand of Paul. Will you look at two Thessalonians? It is 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 that the day of Christ is at hand.

[00:42:44] So here was a letter purporting to come from the Apostle Paul to deceive them. Now the next chapter, Chapter three. Verse 17. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle. I write like this. And to this very day, your signature. Is accepted. It may be a transaction that involves thousands of pounds. I don't know what your signature. Sometimes for life or death. Your signature. And here's the apostle saying, Every epistle, right? My right will have that salutation in my handwriting. And every epistle that Paul wrote has got the words that we have here, Grace with you. They've changed a bit. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. But all was grace with you. Now, if you was if you were to be afflicted as some folks are with some of my manuscript that I write, you would find certain words that you could hardly say that their their letters at all. It's a little wiggle that you gradually recognize means some particular word. It's so characteristic that you couldn't, as it were, invented. And the apostle had got bad sight. He took the pen out of the hand of the writer before her. And he says, See with what large letters I've written unto you the last words of Galatians. He wasn't a good writer.

[00:44:11] It was a slave who was a trade writer. But in every epistle I write like this. Now, without going to every epistle, look at the end of the next one at Timothy and see whether he's got the words at the end. Yes. Grace, be with me. We'll turn more pages and look at the controversial epistle Hebrews that people say they don't know who wrote it, but they know full well Paul didn't. At the end of Hebrews, Grace be with you all. So I tell people I've seen his signature. He said, I'll put my signature. Not a Peter, James or John. Ever use that at the end of their Lipitor? God wouldn't let them. That was reserved for the apostle Paul. Well, that's as far as we can go. Our time is up and we should always be beaten in these studies. But I just ask you to notice that we have this balance of truth which is so characteristic of the book on this side. Praise on that side. Walk to glory together on this side. The words are on that side. The word verse three and six, the Word of God. And as I ought to speak and then again, we have the word ought. And so on my site and all things. And in the emphasis upon the open door. Now, may the Lord bless this little ministry as it goes further afield to those friends whom we rejoice and salute as the Apostle does. Although we do not know them by name or in the flesh.