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[00:00:01] We are looking, as you know, in this series. In the chapter of the Open book. Adjust for a little period at some of the outstanding features in Paul's last epistle. Second, Timothy. And today we are considering the fact. Of it. He could write before the end came. I have finished. My course finished some time ago. I read an account of a musician who was not of the modern school, of course, who went to bed and somebody was fooling about on the piano downstairs and just played a few chords and left it suspended anywhere. And then couldn't rest. He got up and put his dressing gown on and walked downstairs, sat at the piano and brought the thing right down the resolution to the keynote. He got home again. Then he went back to bed. Well, of course, a modern composer would never think of going down to the keynote. He goes flying off the top of the end somewhere and you say, Where's that gone? I suppose it's the missile element in the music that we are now considering. Well, in many things. There is a satisfaction. Is that a confidence when you feel a thing which has started as reached its goal? And half the troubles that we meet. I think with some of the folks we have to deal with is a perplexity. A sort of a feeling. They don't know whether they are on a journey or if there is a journey, whether it's a goal at the end and if there is a goal, whether they've got a trustworthy guide or what's the good of anything.

[00:01:45] So let us remember when we are dealing one with another, and especially those who are out of the way to help them to realize that we know what it is to rest upon a finished work. That's the work of Christ and then ourselves to catch something of His spirit and say, we too have before us. We shall never reach the same heights that the Apostle Paul reached. But we also have a goal in view, and it influences our actions, our thoughts, our plans, our words, the way which we put up with things. Because this is something like a fixed pole star that is always there and never clouded, never altered, and to which we press. The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians. He said in the first chapter, Having this confidence. Having this confidence that he, which hath begun a good work in you will finish it. See, that's the ground of confidence. Not having this confidence that he has begun a good work in you will leave you half stranded and you're going to get home best you can. You see, the figure that we've often referred to in the Old Testament is God who led Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea. He ultimately led those people that had endured over the Jordan into the land of promise.

[00:03:08] So there was a conclusion. There are incidents in that, of course, that need to be pondered. But we go back to the Old Testament, the opening chapters. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Then comes the break, then comes the six days reconstruction and chapter two says. And so he finished. All was finished. And he rested. God finished that work that he came to do. And he will one day finish the whole story and bring it to its glorious end. So I thought it might encourage us to know that there are those written of in the Scriptures, and there are those principles which might help us in the same way to be conscious that there is something to aim at and grace to help us to reach it and not to be satisfied by getting sort of midway and halfway. Now, this chart that you have in front of you was not designed, of course, for this particular meeting, but it just happens to say in many, many in a way, the thing that we're trying to stress that chapter is the last chapter of the book of Exodus. And the writer goes out of his way, as you will see, as I've done, to say at each step, as the Lord commanded Moses, I wrote those words solidly out. I didn't put ditto or little dots.

[00:04:29] I thought I would get the same impression on our mind. He's going through the construction of a tabernacle. It's erected as the Lord commanded Moses. There's the ark of the Mercy seat as the Lord commanded Moses that every feature of it as the Lord commanded Moses. Then you get So the work being finished, then the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. I think it's worth pondering for a moment that that is a sequel, that we do well to remember that as the Lord commanded Moses and each step in the way was finished as He had planned. So we reach the glory and all that that stands for. We'll never go back to the Apostle Paul in the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. You may remember that he calls the believers who were stationed upriver in Ephesus down to the port because he was on his way back to Palestine. He wanted to save an unnecessary journey, and there he gave a review. As you read the words in Acts 20, you know, he's summing up a ministry. I'm going to start a new one. Let's read it. Acts 20, verse 17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks.

[00:06:15] Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now you see, he summed up one ministry. He says, And now I start another one. Behold, I go bound. Now, he had no shackles on his wrists at the moment, but he was already in spirit. The bond slave of Jesus Christ. I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there. Save that the Holy Ghost witnesses in every city saying that bonds and afflictions are widely. But none of these things move. Me neither count all my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. And that included the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. And He tells them, verse 25, They shall see my face no more. So there was an end of one ministry and a facing of another, and that other was a prison ministry. Well, now we get to the second Timothy. The last epistle that he wrote before his death in Chapter four.

[00:07:26] He uses the same words. In chapter four. Verse five. But watch thou in all things endure afflictions. Make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. So in Acts 20, it gives us his desire and resolution that he would allow nothing to hinder him in this pursuit. I care, not for myself, he said, so that I may finish my course with joy. Finish my course. And here he says, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Now, here the Apostle was treading in the steps of his master. You know that he was such a follower of Christ that it is actually written in his own writings. Be ye followers of me as I have a follower of the Lord. He must have been walking very near, mustn't he? He was conscious all the time of his frailty. He was not emulating the thought, giving us the thought that he was on a on a par with his lord. But he was following in his steps. Our savior. Speaks of being a body prepared for him before his birth. Paul goes back before his birth and was conscious afterwards that he was set apart for a ministry.

[00:08:59] Our Savior was taken by the Spirit into a wilderness before he started his ministry to be tested, and Paul turned his back on Jerusalem and went into Arabia so that he might have the same testing and face to face with tax in the presence of God and our Savior. Three times asked that a certain cup may pass from him in the awful agony of Gethsemane, and the Apostle Paul had a thorn in the flesh, a minister of Satan sent to buffet him, and three times he prayed that he might be delivered from it. You

see, these are not accidental. There are some little echoes of his masters, and they echoed his master's desire, too, because you remember. On one occasion, our savior went into Samaria and there were no dealings between the Jews and the Samaritans at that time. And he sat upon a well, weary and he asked a woman to give him a drink. One of the extraordinary things about the passage is, as far as we know, he never got the drink because she started speaking to him. And she went back to her. Old people and began to tell them, This must be the Messiah. And when the disciples came back, they said the city band. Given him food or what? He says, My meat and my drink is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.

[00:10:26] And then chapter 17, the hour is come. He said, Father, the hour is come. Glorify thou me glorify thy son. The hour is come. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. He hadn't died on the cross yet, but he finished the whole program that God had mapped out for him. He set his face to go to Jerusalem and nothing could stop him. And then. Even Christ in that awful time of the cross could spare a moment or two to cast his mind over what the Scriptures said about himself. Would you believe it? And knowing that the Scriptures had said in the prophetic utterances of the past that he would say, I thirst. He said it. And now all things that were written of him having been fulfilled. He bowed his head and gave up the ghost. Say it is finished. Now, on that basis, all our hopes rest. If Christ had hesitated or failed in one item, we should still be without a saviour. So finished work is something that we should delight in and always be thankful for. And then after that, it should become the pattern to guide ourselves. I have been accused by some friends of One Direction and accused by other friends in the opposite direction. So the two pushing one way and one the other. It keeps me more or less in the middle. So I'm all right. One says, I'm a man of one track mind, you see, And then the other says, Oh, but he's interested in Shakespeare and he's interested in music.

[00:12:03] And he spends a lot of time when he's on his holidays in painting sketches, see? So between the two of them, I'm standing more or less upright, just the same. But at the same time, we cannot help avoiding being one track minded. If once our feet are put on the road of salvation and once we see the glory awaiting us, and once we have the pattern of our Savior and the pattern of those who closely followed him, The Apostle Paul was a man of one track mind, although he had very wide sympathies. He said this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto the

things which are before. According to the mark, I pressed to the goal. One thing he says for me to live is Christ. To die is gain. You can't argue with that man. You can't dissect him. So I thought that as we've been looking at some of the ways in which he has brought certain features before us in this last epistle, I should be very remiss if I didn't end up on that note as this is the last one of this series before we pick up the threads that have been laid down over in this holiday month of August.