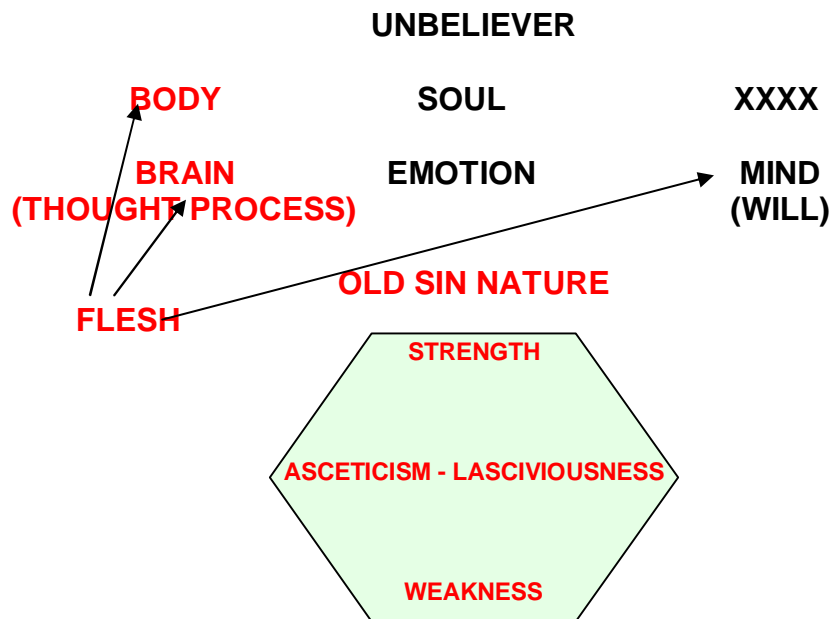


Colossians 1, Part 4 (Conrad Bowman) (Summer 2006)

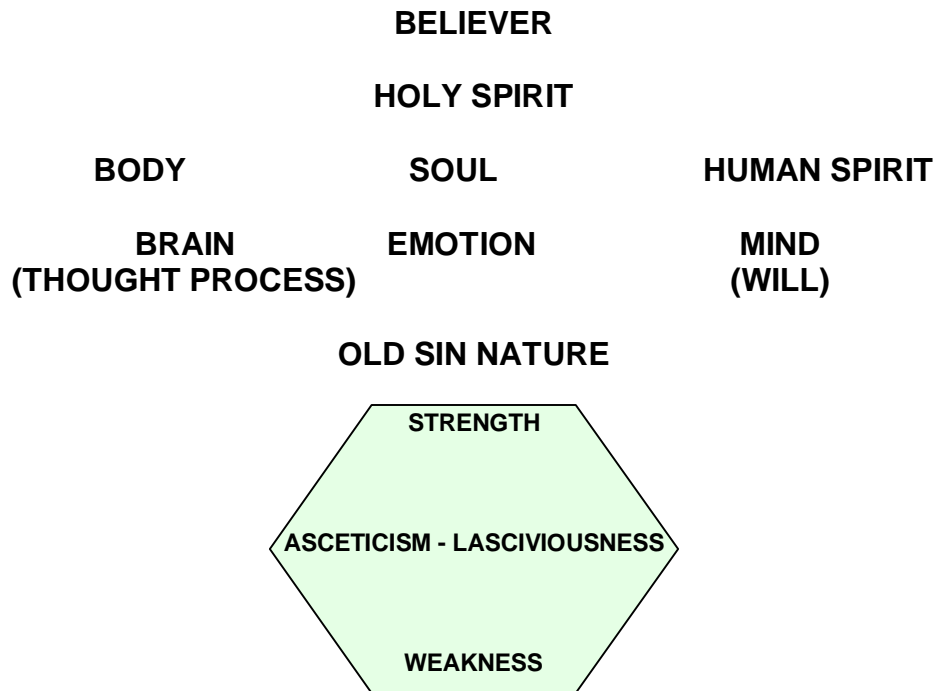
Ray Johnson. [Comment and Question regarding *agape* love.]

Conrad Bowman. Oh sure, that'll be a quick one, and it'll tie into what we need to cover this morning anyway. *Agape* love in terms of being sourced in the human spirit from within us, is in fact God's love. But, the unregenerate man has a Body and a Soul, but does not have a Spirit. He is spiritually dead from Adam's fall. Regeneration by definition means that when that unregenerate man accepts the Gospel by faith, which is offered to him by grace, he now has Body, Soul, and Spirit. And that human spirit, of which the Holy Spirit communicates – His Spirit witnesses with our spirit thereby we know the things of God. So he's now spiritually alive. Here – the only receptor he has – the only thing that drives his will – is soul.

[CONRAD'S DEPICTION ON THE BOARD]



Now, look at this unbeliever, which you were in the past. Your decision-making processes were driven by information that you collected in your **soul**. Your soul got its information from your emotions (how you felt about one thing or another), or how it might benefit you in some way. Your brain decided whether or not this met your standards of behavior, and you acted.



Now, if you look at this thing, and take love itself, the Body responds to *eros*. If it feels good, do it. The Soul only knows – if it benefits me, do it. That’s what soulish love is all about. And we know, the soulish man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, for there’re spiritually discerned. And that’s in the human spirit. So man driven by his Soul responds and calls it love. Either to this – which is very, very tied to adolescent hormones. This is tied to –

Gentleman. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. Chevrolets, Fords, and all that stuff. This down here – I used to ... [Inaudible]. Norma told me not to – but one last time – in the back seat of the Chevrolet. [Laughter].

Soulsh love is love that comes from shared things. You both like the same music. Uh – you both like the same sin. You can share the old sin nature traits, and what-have-you. That’s Soulsh love, and the world will call that love.

Now, down here in the human spirit, *agape* can only reside here. And its infused into us because God is love. So, here’s love which comes to us at the moment of our salvation – is poured in and accumulated right there in that human spirit. And that’s the only source of it. *Agape* love can’t source can’t source here [Body]. And it can’t source here [Soul]. It can only source here

[Spirit] where we're spiritually alive. Because this is where we accumulate everything that we know about God. The human spirit fills our brain with sound doctrine and knowledge of God. And that becomes the basis upon which the Holy Spirit directs our life within each activity. Now, almost every activity we get involved in can be duplicated by the enemy. Francis Schaeffer made a very good case in *The Mark of the Christian*, while the Christian at the end of the twentieth century – *The Mark of the Christian* was the very last chapter in that book. He made a very good case in that book – although he is thoroughly, thoroughly Covenant [as opposed to Dispensational]. It gives me a toothache to say this – but it's a really, really good book on the treatment of the effect of *agape* love. It just is excellent. That is why I say here it can't be duplicated and is only sourced here [the Spirit]. And the human spirit driving the will of man. Yes sir?

Ray Johnson. [Comment about *agape* love].

Conrad Bowman. Without the filling of the Spirit, *agape* love will not get expressed. It won't be expressed. Because without the filling Spirit you cut off from the power of the Spirit empowering your life. So without the filling of the Spirit, the Old Sin Nature jumps into control. And what you get is area of strength, and it bypasses this altogether. Because the believer has the Old Sin Nature just like the unbeliever. And if he's not filled by the Spirit, and is not powered by the Spirit, and he's operating on the power of something else, and the power in his life is the Adamic nature that takes over the minute the filling of the Spirit quits empowering your life. It just happens. And you get believers acting like unbelievers. And when you walk as an unbeliever, you lie and do not the truth – is what 1<sup>st</sup> John tells us. Because the truth is, you're better than that. You're more than that. And if you're walking as something else, you're a facade. Yes sir?

Ray Johnson. [Inaudible. Something about, I'm not following you here because I know a lot of priests that have given up their lives for us].

Conrad Bowman. I understand that. I understand that. Soulful love will take you there in a heartbeat. Brotherly love will take you –

Ray Johnson. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's not *agape* love. That's not *agape* love. That's a pay-off. You can give up your life for somebody else because you feel like that's what you ought to do. That's not *agape* love. *Agape* love is a completely different thing.

Completely different thing. The whole training of a marine or anybody else is you can live because of pay-off.

Ray Johnson. [Comment about "pay-off"].

Conrad Bowman. Pay-off is, you've done the right thing. That's the pay-off. But that is still not *agape* love. That's human engineering and behavioral science, but that's not *agape* love. I've explained to you how *L'Oreal* uses the same thing and still does in order to maintain the market place. It's on your TV every day. That's not *agape* love.

Ray Johnson. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. No sir. It did exactly what they intended to do for exactly the reasons they intended to do it. It was not a wasted life, but it was not *agape* love. We don't want to make a mistake with confusing *agape* with the highest level of what a human is capable of doing. But it's different.

Ray Johnson. [Further comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. [Inaudible. Expressed disagreement with most of what he said].

Pat Welbourn. [More comments about *agape* love].

Conrad Bowman. Now, we've gotten way, way off in the briar patch, and we can come back to that. I'm going to leave that, otherwise we ...

Betijean Kennerly. [Comment. Inaudible. Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Now we have to live with this on a regular basis. I'm sure you – aw. That's terrible. Ray, thank you sir for opening that up. We'll have to come back and hit that again. And I'll make a note to do that.

We're in Colossians chapter 1. And last week I was making an attempt to finish this, and we left it at 23 [verse]. Actually, 24. So I'll back up just a minute and catch this. I want to make sure I finish it. Look at verse 19. I'm going to read rapidly through part of this without stopping, and then I'm going to pick it up in verse 24. We're going to the end. Then I'm going to fold back and we'll take questions if they come up. Verse 19 last week,

19. It was the Father's pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in [Him] the Son.

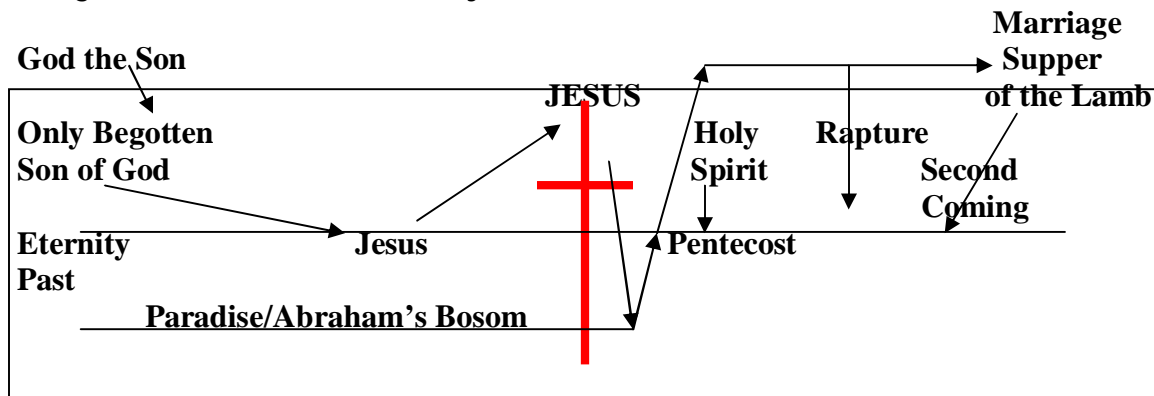
And you remember "fullness" is the word *pleroma*. P-L-E-R-O-M-A. Sometimes it's spelled with a double "e." But it means everything that fills up something to make it complete. So in verse 19, it says, it was the Father's good pleasure, for in Him – Christ – all the fullness to dwell. Okay? So everything was to pour into Christ. Now, I had a call this morning about 7:15 a.m. talking about this very same subject from a slightly different angle. And I want to – I want to give it to you. Jerry File, Jr. God who is omnipresent. What does the word "omnipresent" mean?

Gentleman. Everywhere.

Conrad Bowman. Okay. Everywhere at all times. Don't leave those two out. Which means, He was in eternity past, as He is in eternity future, after all things have ended. And He ...

Lady. [Comment. Inaudible. Class banter on extraneous subjects].

[Diagram From the Commentary].



Conrad Bowman. Alright. So here we are. God who is omnipresent, is before all things. He is after all things. And in all things all the time. Now, we tend to think – and right now the mind is full of this stuff with the Da Vinci Code and how Scripture was put together. This kid called me last night about 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock and he said, Conrad. Conrad. Do you realize that God who is omnipresent everywhere all the time. When He wrote the Bible, He didn't just dictate the Old Testament to Moses and then wait and give it to the prophets. And then wait and give it to somebody else. Did He? No. He didn't. He didn't.

Do you realize He did it all at the same time. All of it. When He gave Moses Genesis, He gave Paul Ephesians. And He gave John Revelation. All at the same time. He's known it all. From here – to here – to here. Even what comes beyond that. Now it should not surprise us then to describe that the Old Testament would be able to take a needle at the parchment and run it down through the layers of that parchment and predict at every level what was said. Alright? That's not surprising. We tend to think about that with regard to the Old Testament. But children listen. He is that precise with what He's given us from Matthew to Revelation. So it should not surprise us to see absolute unity in the message that's coming from the page. Okay? When He gave Moses that first record and we studied that – what? Two years ago? And we got all the promises of God, and we came right up to Genesis. And then everything from the end of Genesis on to the Gospels was an explanation of what was happening to those promises. There's all that room in here – all of this. From here to here, is an explanation of those promises that he laid down in Genesis. That was good. We took that in and we started that, and that was good. Then in the Gospels you have those four magical records of God sending His Son to complete those promises, and the record of Israel one more time throwing Him out and rejecting Him. Took Him outside the camp and killed the promised one. Took Him out there. Slew Him. Well, he'd have gotten His hands on some disciples that He personally selected and He drew them to Himself. And He had these disciples with Him. And He told them what was going to happen – what their job was the minute He was gone. And the disciples then were impacted by what happened at Pentecost when He was resurrected and then ascended and the Spirit came and empowered them. And the disciples became Apostles because they were eye witnesses to Him in His majesty. And they had this message and they understood it. Everything that they understood, they had it all to right here. And Moses had it all to right here. And the prophets in this period right here began to see what was going to happen to this chosen nation. And they also had glimpses of what was going to happen down here that they recorded. They didn't really understand it all. And the Gospel accounts gave this much information. And they began to build. Now you see what's happened? God's people all along the way – this plan that God gave them all at once being revealed. One layer at a time it's being peeled away so that man could see exactly what He intended from the beginning. And now we get down past the Apostles, and He reaches down and He gets one last Jew and it's Paul. And He grabs him on the road to Damascus where he's going to do some more harm to these people who called themselves Christians. And He knocks him down with the light of His presence. Just like He did Adam and several of the prophets along the way. And He got Paul, and He began to pour into Paul this next layer which is paper penned in

terms of Scriptural record. All this stuff about how to deal with Law. And then you get this thin little section down here about how to live under grace. And He gave that to Paul, and Paul began to unfold it. And he didn't understand that at first. And so he – we put Romans out. And when you look at Romans, you do not see the detail in Romans that you see in Ephesians about what the Church is. It's just not there, because Romans is written to everybody. And it tells you what your position is before a righteous God. And that's what Romans is. Acts then begins to record what happens as these Apostles began to weave their way through the countryside and spread this thing out a little bit. So Acts – you've got a historical track over here. And over here you've got this doctrinal track that's building. Okay? And we study the transitional Jewish books of change. And 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter and Hebrews. And we saw God's pursuit of the Jew into that Age of Grace. He didn't just leave them and turn His back. What He did was – He begged them to come into grace and come into the Church. And that's what James, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter and Hebrews was all about. And by the time He had done that, His grace was satisfied. His mercy was satisfied in terms of what He offered. And then He empowered Paul by pouring His Spirit into Paul, and beginning to reveal to Paul this part of the message. And we studied Ephesians and we saw the beauty of the Church. God's masterpiece, which He purposed from eternity past to do. That's you. That's me. That's His Church. It was His eternal purpose to put this Body of Christ together. Now understand that. We are on the pinnacle of what God has provided for mankind. The touchstone. We are His poem for all of creation because – now that was in Ephesians. Now we've backed up a little bit. We were going then into – we did. We went to Titus on the instructions on how to make sure that masterpiece functioned right. And there're two more Books on that – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy. We'll get to those. And then we backed up and we picked up Colossians which is the seed book to Ephesians. Paul wrote this some eighteen years before Ephesians. And this letter to Colossians. He's already beginning to think what's going to happen after he's gone. He realizes that unto him the Ministry of Reconciliation was given. What's going to happen when he's gone? Who's going to be teaching of the Reconciliation of God? And everything that He accomplished on the cross. Who's going to be telling people the magnitude of that? And so he calls Titus and calls Timothy, and he gets those guys around him, and there're several others. And he said, Timothy in Ephesus. Titus. This is the reason I left you in the Crete. You've got to instruct this young Church. You've got to tell them how to organize things. But then we back up to Colossians, and then in Colossians we see the seeds of this thought process that led to Ephesians being formed. Now the reason I've gone through all of that is for this.

19. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.

And that's verse 19.

20. and through Him [through Christ] to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace [for all] through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

It doesn't matter. Everything was brought into a condition of being reconciled to God. There was no more barrier between anything that was made and God because of the peace that was brought to man in the cross. The cross then created a ground of peace. And on this ground of peace it was a sanctuary. And the ground of peace is our sanctuary. And what we're saved from is the wrath of God who is judging all who would not availed themselves of this peace that's created right here. So when we say we've moved onto the ground of peace and we're given the Spirit of God who regenerates in us the human spirit to accumulate the things that God wants us to know of Him. And He pours that into us. Okay? And just fills us full of that. Because what's happening is this. This creature that comes right here – that's me and you and each one of us. Redeemed on the basis of God's grace, or faith. This creature right here has become the repository because this creature has been joined to the perfect sacrifice; taken into the grave; and then resurrected and ascended to be with Him. We, in union with Christ, have become with him the recipient of all the fullness that God the Father ever intended for the Son. Okay? That's strong. That's as strong as it gets. In all of creation, that was intended for this little group of people covered by this little sliver of Scripture. It doesn't take a whole lot to explain this. We have books around, and there are thousands of – there are millions of people right now in their finest, sitting in a pew, listening to a message that doesn't have one sliver of reality in it with regard to who we really are in Christ.

Martin Mosvold. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. They're learning how to walk. They're learning how to organize their life. They're learning how to work. Let me tell you something. Do you remember in Ephesians what it said? You are God's masterpiece – His poem. Prepared for good works. What's the last part of it?



Lady. "Which God prepared beforehand for us to do."

Conrad Bowman. Which God had prepared already – He had done them, in advance – for us to walk in them. His work. I'm talking about the things we do. His work – walk in them. I went back this week. I made it back to Revelation. And this week I spent writing just a few things on the Letter to the Church at Ephesus. Here's what God said, to the Church at Ephesus write: I know your works. I know your positions. You are busy, busy, busy. But I've got a problem with you. You've left your first love. You didn't lose it. You left it.

To Paul, he gave the message: you are God's masterpiece, prepared for walking in the works the Father has already done. By the time John wrote his Revelation, which is two decades later, it's already recorded. You've left your first love, and you got busy working. I'm going to take the lamp out of the place. You know what the lamp is? The Gospel. I'm going to remove the Gospel from you. Now here's a church that's working its heart out. They're busy doing all these things for God. They're working for God. And He said, I'm going to take your lamp away, *because you're working without looking at Me. Your job is to adore Me, and be preoccupied with Me. To get to know Me. To come to know Him better is what we're designed for. If we don't know Him intimately, and grow in that knowledge deeper everyday, because we're reconciled to Him, the Gospel will not spread by our efforts. We'll just be a busy church.* What a stinging indictment, and it was delivered to John within twenty years of Ephesians. It just came right on the heels of it. You can put a needle through that verse, and come right down to Ephesians; and come right down to Colossians and see the seed of that message. The delivery of that message. And the indictment, because it didn't hold. All of that Church in Ephesus; that had so much of Paul's work in it. It had Timothy left to organize it. It had the elders and deacons that they gave right then. It said in the Letter to Ephesus – you've tried those who have said they're elders and are not. You tested them, and they got busy. They took the Word and they applied it. And they started testing their elders; and He commends them for that. And then they left it. They got so involved with what they're doing for God that they failed to realize that it was done so that they might know Him. You see how slippery that slope is? Okay? You see how slippery it is? Our job is not to work for God. Our job is to go where God is working for Himself, and just to be there; and say to those people, don't you love Him for what He's done for you. Don't you love Him for what He's done for you. Okay? That's our privilege. We're not there to save them. The Spirit's already there doing that. We're trying to find out where the Spirit's working, so we can get there. Okay? There's a cross on an ambulance. There's a reason for that. It's going to where trauma is. Every

church ought to have a van with a cross on it where it could go where the Spirit's at work. Okay? Because that's what we ought to be doing.

Gentleman. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. When we find a man coming to Christ, we ought to pull up along side and hug his neck and say, isn't this great? Thank you for letting me share this with you. That's Gospel testimony because it reinforces it. Fully appreciative of God's work.

[Inaudible]

Conrad Bowman. Here's how merciful God is. Here's how much He saved you from. Here's what He saved you to. I want to share it with you. I just want to be here with you and share it with you. We didn't cause them to be there. We can pray and join in God's work bringing them there. The Spirit of God at work. The Spirit of God at work. Now, let me race through a couple of verses now.

21. Although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind,  
engaged in evil deeds,

That's their prior state.

22. yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body ...

So he uses their own experience as testimony.

22. ... through death, in order to present you before Him holy and  
blameless and beyond reproach,

So Christ gathered us together; took us to Him; took us in death with Him –

22. ... in order that He might present [us before the Father] holy  
and blameless and beyond reproach,

"If." First class condition. "Since." If indeed and it's true.

23. Since you continue in faith,

"The" is not found in the text in that. It's found in faith. And that calls attention to the quality of the faith.

23. If you continue in faith, firmly established and steadfast,

That describes the faith.

23. ... and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel that you have heard,

That's the content of the Gospel that he's taught them in the past.

23. ... which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

So what he's saying is, God has already proclaimed the Gospel before all creation in heaven, and that's from here to right here where we are. And I was given the ministry of that Gospel which has always been proclaimed by the omnipresent God through everything. Okay. So I was given the ministry of that Gospel.

24. Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the Church, in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

Now what Paul is saying is this. When Christ suffered, He suffered every affliction that we or anyone carries because of sin in the world. And that's every affliction. Paul says, I realize that when I hurt, that's a hurt that Christ bore. When I have pain, that's a pain that Christ bore. I am filling up and completing His pain with every one I bear. That's what he's saying. And that's the fellowship of suffering that the Church is involved in. Okay? We're sharing in the suffering of Christ, because that which afflicts us afflicted Him. Now,

25. Of this Church, I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God,

Remember, that the Word of God to Paul was not the Book as we have it. The Word of God was God's revelation of His intention for the Church to Paul for all our behalf. That is, the preaching of the Word of God,

26. that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

So what Paul is saying is, here in this point of time, Moses had this much. The prophets had this much. The disciples had this much. The Church has been given this much through Paul; as God peels away what He has given from beginning to end. And every once in a while, He gives a glimpse of what's to come. And that's what happened to the Apostle John. The Apostle John right here behind Paul saw this. And he also wrote the life of Christ in his own Gospel; but it's quite different from the other ones, isn't it? Because they didn't see this, and he did. Now,

26. that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

27. to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

There it is. It hadn't been revealed before, because that requires union. And

28. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.

Just as Christ is complete in His afflictions by what everyman experiences. And

29. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Because Paul understood that the work that was being done emanated from Christ within him through the Spirit of God. Any questions?

Betijean Kennerly. But that's what the cross did for us. It made us acceptable to God through Christ.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Betijean Kennerly. That's what that means.

Conrad Bowman. Holy. Acceptable. Set apart. That's right. That's right. And now what Paul has been dealing in these epistles is the position to which He has saved us. He's giving us – if He told us before we were saved that we were His masterpiece for all creation, it would have scared us to death. Literally,

frightened us to death. He spends a couple of years putting us together. And then He begins to unfold that. What a beauty this is going to be when we get to Revelation.

Father we thank You – we thank You for the way – for the way You unfold and reveal Yourself to us. Continue to enable us to see that; as we see Your goodness, and sense Your mighty working in us just as Paul described it. We thank You for the week ahead of us. Guide us through it, by Your hand, in Christ's name. Amen.

Thank you so very much.

[TAPE ENDED]. [This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].