

Ephesians 6, Part 3 (Conrad Bowman) (April 2, 2006)

[Class started before tape recorded connected]

... this weekend, and he asked me if I was familiar with Joe Wall's message, "Going for the Gold." And I did hear it the last time he was here. That was the core of his message. Phil made the observation, and it's absolutely true, every teacher who teaches consistently, has a central theme that is going to recur, as I do almost every time I open my mouth. So, we're talking about me now. Joe Wall's is "Going for the Gold." I will not teach a lesson, ever, that "Union with Christ" does not come up. You know that already. It is almost a mantra. Because I think it is so foundational to everything that the Church is about that it's going to come up in every lesson. Consequently, I also measure other teachers by their use of the word. And if they don't use my mantra, they don't make my list. It's as simple as that. In my opinion, once you see that principle, how could you possibly overlook it and not build it into what you teach? You know. You get so committed to an idea. Now that doesn't mean that I don't appreciate other people who don't use it, and don't see it for what they *do* see. They have a right to be wrong ... [laughter] ... and adopt some good stuff along the way. So we strip the good stuff out of their message now, and move on.

Lady. Is union the same thing as having Christ and the Holy Spirit indwelling us?

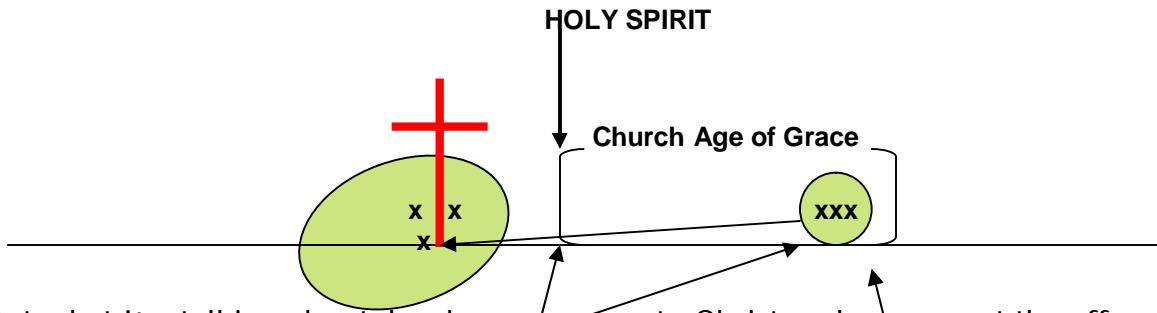
Conrad Bowman. No ma'am. No ma'am. I'm not talking about the indwelling Christ. That's the Spirit of Christ in you who is there by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit in you. I'm talking about when you, as a believer, accept the offer of salvation that's made.

[Betijean Kennerly (*our much-loved, resident, professional, school teacher*) signaled Conrad to make sure the recorder was on].

Conrad Bowman. It's on. Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. I'm a good soldier. I turned it on.

Betijean Kennerly. You're a good student. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Thank you so much. That tape is on and is good for a gold star. [Laughter].



But what I'm talking about, is when you come to Christ and you accept the offer of salvation that's made, the Holy Spirit takes you and puts you into union (1) with all other believers and (2) with Christ Himself, and we're then the Body of Christ. The down payment of that is the Father's deposit of the Holy Spirit in you, whereby *He claims you as His own*, and that's the sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit. He claims you as His own for all eternity. See, so these things begin to roll up in a package. And, you can see that wonderful thing beginning to happen. Well, that foundational bedrock of the Church is you being put into union with Christ. And that's the illustration that I give often, and it's more than an illustration in my opinion; it's reality. When you today, in the 21st century, accept Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit takes you in the 21st century, to the very 1st century, in that Upper Room in Pentecost, where the baptism of the Spirit took place, where He took 120 Galileans – that ties them together and joins them in Christ into the single body called the Church. You are taken individually back to that Upper Room, and joined to that group, as a single entity in God's sight; the Body of Christ on earth. The result of that is we are His continued presence on earth. We're the presence, the temple of the Holy Spirit, on earth.

The second result of that, from which we cannot escape, and shouldn't, but we try, is that the Spirit of God, and the character of God, is deposited fully in you as an individual. He didn't put part of Himself in you. He puts all of Himself in you. Now, the work of the Spirit in you is to constantly reveal those aspects of *His character* in you, in your daily life and in your daily experience. The more of that you can see, the more you get out of the way and let happen – because remember, He's prepared the works beforehand, that we should walk in them – that's what the last chapter of Ephesians was all about. We are His masterpiece, and He's prepared the works, and ordained them beforehand, that we should walk in them. He did the work! Okay? That's part of the finished work of Christ. We're walking in them, in His finished works. The purpose of that walk is to reveal the character of God that's resident in us by means of the Holy Spirit's presence. Because the Spirit Himself does not – doesn't just carry part of the character of God, He carries all of it. And, He is reproducing the character of God, the character of Christ, in us, on a daily basis. So it's not *our* life then that

shines out; **it's His life.** It's not the life that He lived when He was here for thirty-three years; **it's the life that He lives now from where He is on high.** That's a distinct difference that we need to make. Because too much of the Church is trying to reproduce the walk of Christ in presenting Himself as *the Messiah of Israel*. **We do not want to do that.**

Evelyn Wamble. What is His character?

Conrad Bowman. His character is different as Savior than as Messiah. His presentation of Himself that we see recorded in the Gospels is the presentation of Himself as Israel's Messiah. That's what He was doing. And He was rejected at the end of that; crucified, according to the Law, outside the camp. And after that crucifixion, He went into the grave, from which He was resurrected, and then He ascended. But it was not until the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost that there was even the possibility for His character to be reproduced in us. It couldn't be done by our own human spirit, or by our own soul. It had to be done by His Spirit. So, there's an advancement of principle here in comparing Israel to the Church. It's not a qualitative advancement in God's sight – His earthly people are still His earthly people and His chosen people are still His chosen people. But the Body of Christ remains the Body of Christ, and it's unique, absolutely unique. It's that uniqueness that we are studying. In fact, we'll spend our time in Ephesians 6 this morning. And then next week, we're going to dip into Titus, and that would be the beginning of the Pastoral Epistles. And, you see what we've done, because what Paul is doing here, is explaining to the believers in Ephesus – he's explaining to the Ephesians the foundation of the Church. Now in Titus and 1st and 2nd Timothy, he explains to the leaders of those bodies the beginning of the organization of the Church and the leadership of the Church. Paul says, over in Timothy, listen, I've run my race. The end is near; I'm through. Okay? Now he says that toward the end of his letter. In this letter he spends a great deal of time talking to Timothy, and talking to Titus, about how to look out upon those that are here and select as leaders those that are elders, who are going to stand in front of the body and going to represent the Church to the unbelieving world, as well as lead the Church in instruction and doctrine. It's going to all be very important. We are accused, in teaching dispensations – dispensationalism – we are accused of abandoning historic Christianity – as William Calk puts it – the historic Christianity that the Church has followed for the last two millenniums. I am guilty of that. You betcha I'm abandoning it. When I look at the last two centuries, and what the Church has done, rightly so that it's abandoned. We need to get as far away from it as we can. We need to get to exactly what the reformers were reaching for – an intimate relationship with Scripture, and an even more

intimate relationship with God. And, we need to purposely search the Scripture for God's purpose from here to the end of this age, because too many of us believe that the end of this Age is not too far ahead. When we look at the signs, and it becomes clear, the Bible's description of what mankind is to be involved in, before Christ returns for His Church, is surrounding us. It's just surrounding us; and, we'll see that unfold in the Pastoral Epistles as well. We see children who are arrogant, disobedient and unruly. We see men who are violent and are abusers of themselves and of other men, women, and children. And we see children who are disobedient and violent and disruptive. I mean, really people, we're there. We're there at the midnight hour. Anyone who doubts that does not read the paper or listen to the news. You know we are right there. Every program we've got – we were talking a while ago about programs for reaching kids, or adults that have already failed. This is incredibly important. The Gospel is the only hope we can know. The ship is going down, the people that are threatened are in the water, and we've got to be in the business of throwing them lifelines – the Pauline Gospel is what we're about. You know that we have got to be real careful we don't lose our focus on that. The Church has always been missions-minded. Pray God it stays that way whether we're talking about the people across the street or people around the world. We've got to keep our vision in front of us, and very active in our plans.

Turn to Ephesians chapter 6. Let's see, I've got all my wandering out of the way real early today. Now we're going to do chapter 6. Well, we'll take bets on that.

Phil Richman. [Comment. Inaudible]. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Chapter 6.

Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

Does that reestablish the Law for believers? The obvious question. Does it? No, it does not. Paul is not reestablishing the Law. If that was his intention in saying that, or if we took the position that Paul in saying "honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise," that the Law is the reason children ought to obey their parents in the Lord – *if* we said that – then we must take the whole Law. Remember, the Law is spoken of as a single grape. It's not a bunch of grapes. It's a single grape. So, if you take one part of it, you take it

all. Okay? If you want the promise of obedience leading to long life, because it's stated in the Law, then you've got to take the whole Law. It's just common sense. His first statement was, "children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." If he meant to reinstate the Law, he would have said, obey your parents because it's a commandment. He didn't. He said obedience brings results. So, you don't obey because it's a commandment. You obey because it's the right thing to do. So, it's not a reestablishment of the Law, it's a recognition of common sense and a promise.

Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction [the word "admonition," used in the KJV] of the Lord.

So, twice he's set "the Lord" as the standard, not the Law, and he's not setting the life of Christ as Messiah. He's setting the life of Christ from where he is now. That life is being reproduced in you by the 'down payment' of your inheritance, the Spirit within you.

Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Principles of persuasion

For example—professionally I called on doctors. Jacque and I were talking about this. We called on doctors as trained salesmen – we called on them for years and years and years, and spent a lot of money in the medical profession printing up expensive brochures and advertising. There was a reason why we did that; it's because when you sit across the desk from a man or a woman, and you say to him/her, "here's the way you've been doing this procedure, and I've got this new device to show you. You've been using these pacemakers for years; but, I've got one over here that's better. This is a better machine. It will do this, and this, and this, and this." Now, if you say those kind of things while holding that new device in front of them, or holding your brochure up in front of them, like this, then you've just accused them of practicing bad medicine, of exercising less than the best choice that was out there. Professionals do not respond well to that. Really, none of us do. We don't like being told, "You know, this is the way you've been doing it, and you've been wrong. So, you need to straighten out and make this choice." If I'm going to accuse you of something, if I have a group that I'm speaking to and – this is just a little trick on our part- if I'm going to say to you, I want you to look at your sin in your life, and I stand behind a desk or a

lectern to do that, then it's very accusing. That would be a position of authority. Watch preachers. If they're going to ask you to examine your life about something and make changes, then they come out from behind this thing [the podium] and they get over here to the side. Or, what's even better is they put it on an overhead projector or computer projection and put it on a screen, and then they come out here where you are, and address that issue from the aisle near the first row. Now, if I really want to nail that point down, I can say, "here's what you ought to be doing," and I point to the screen or board where it's displayed, then I become a counselor to you. And there may be ten thousand in the room, or twenty thousand, or a thousand, or a hundred, but if I say that from here, I am not accusing you, I'm advising you that this is something you need to consider and there are the points you need to think about up there. I am telling them that you are *not* measuring yourself *by me* or what I say. You're measuring yourself by the standard that's up on the board. If I really want to connect, I'll touch somebody in the audience, because when you touch anybody, you are touching everybody. It's subtle, but that's the way most people respond.

Now, these things tell us how easily we're moved in terms of examining ourselves according to what's said, or, the way we get angry, or the way we don't; or, the way we present our ideas. Now the reason I'm saying this is that when you sit down to talk to somebody, and your goal is to bring them to a closer relationship to Christ, and you take your Scripture or your outline, or whatever it is you're going to do, and you hand it to them and put it in front of them this way (holding it out in front of you) and say to them, as you would to a friend, this is something I would like you to consider or read. Then you've just issued a challenge. It's as simple as this—"John, here's something I'd like you to take a look at." Instead of putting it (your idea) in front of them, you put it over here, so that you both turn to look at it—it's as simple as that. In front, it's a challenge; from the side it's an invitation. "Here's what this guy says. He says this, and this, and this, and this about Christ. I happen to agree with that. But I would like for you to take a look at that thing, and see what you think about it, and we can talk about it." How easy is that? Take your children, for example. Because when you get ready to talk to your children, you're usually steamed. [Laughter]. Right? And you get right in their face, if you can, because you want them to listen. Otherwise, they're going to look around, and it's going to be all over the place. And so you find yourself often in a position of accusing. Right? Or you are confronting them. When this happens, you take those objects that represent the principles that you want them to consider, and move them away from you. And address them from half way across the room, if you have to, but at least from across the table. You'll find that you will be taking your position

then, along side of your children facing the problem or idea, rather than confronting them with it. It's a simple technique, but it works so well. It really works well, whether with professionals, hired help, or your children.

Now, those are the kind of things I think of, when it says,

Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

This Bible, God's instructions to us, need to be something that you're considering *together with the people* you want to influence, not confrontationally but rationally. Any questions?

Slaves be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ.

Remember that the word "heart" *kardia*, is the Greek word used for the upper organs of the body, the center of a person's thought process. So, if we're going to translate that into English, it ought to be, "... in the sincerity of your mind." It's talking about mental sincerity. That's what it's talking about.

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your MIND, as to Christ.

And the words mean, 'consider your masters as you would consider Christ, in terms of your obedience.'

Don't just give them eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, do the will of God from the MIND [from where you think. Think about what you're doing].

Not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, do the will of God from your heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

There is no suggestion whatsoever of demanding rights, or advantage, or demanding a better position, or demanding extra consideration, or anything. And remember, slavery at that time was a means of debt service. There was a system of indentured slavery. If you owed a man something, or if you borrowed something from him to benefit your family; you might indenture yourself, or even one of your kids, for that matter, as the indentured-service slave, for whatever period of time that it took to satisfy the debt. That was part of the culture at that time. Any questions on that?

Verse 9 – flip side of the same coin.

Masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

So, eliminate this threat business. Now, here is the tough part; applying it to your relationship with your children. Toughest thing in the world is to eliminate threats when dealing with a two-year old. Watch them—those parents that have not learned how to deal with a two-year old without using threats—they go through the ‘one, two, three routine.’ And they’ll count ‘one, two, three’ – fifty times in the same grocery store before they get from this isle to the next one. ‘One, two, three,’ and nothing ever follows “three,” except “one” [Laughter]. If “one” always follows then how long did it take that kid to figure that out? about twice. If what’s going to follow “three” is “one” again, then here we go. Here we go again.

I’m talking to Daryl, my youngest brother, on the phone. He has a five-year old son now. And he says, “James, come talk to your uncle Conrad,” and, repeats, “James, come talk to your uncle Conrad.” I say, what’s he doing? He says he’s in his chair with rollers on it out in the middle of the floor, his arms are out, and he’s spinning round and round. And then he says again, “James.” And he [James] says, “I’m busy.” I am hearing the conversation on the phone. “Busy doing what?” “I’m thinking.” A five-year old—he’s *thinking*. So, he finally says, okay. So he comes, and he says, “Hello.” And I said, “James, what are you doing?” “I’m thinking, good-bye.” He’s satisfied the requirement; right? Now, he’s past two. He’s gotten to five. It’s clear that you must master the art of communicating without threats very quickly if you don’t want to soon be dealing with a clever, obstinate, disobedient teenager.

So I told you that story about he and Paz – Daryl and Paz were going to see our Mom on her birthday here about a month ago. And he calls James in and he says to James, “Mom and I are going to see Grandma, we’re going to Mississippi, we’re leaving in the morning. We won’t be here when you wake up. Your aunt Melonie is going to be here, and she’s going to take you to visit your cousin for the night.” He said, “maybe me too.” Daryl said, “we’ll be back.” James asked, “I’m not going?” “No, you’re not going. You’re not going.” James turns around, and in that room they’ve got a big picture window about six feet wide, and he said James turned around to that window and he said, “I’m not going and you’re going.” And he said, “yes, and we’ll be back.” At which James threw his arms open wide and he said, “Well what about my world?” Five years old. Daryl said “where in the world does he get this stuff?” [amusing laughter]. Watching TV. What about my world? Isn’t that just like us? We’re all in that five-year old category. That’s the first thing we think when change is rolling through—What about my world? What about me? You know that’s the way we react. And we start at such an early age to do that. Train them up “in the nurture and admonition” of the Lord. That means, “as the bow is bent.” That’s not the way that I first learned it. I first learned it this way; when the instructions in the Old Testament – you can train up a child to do the right things, and away he would go. And when he’s old, he won’t depart from it. And then I learned that “the way he will go” is literally “as the bow is bent,” or according to its bent. In other words, if you’re going to make a bow, you go into the woods, you pick the wood you’re going to use, and that wood, when you cut it out of the tree, has a natural inclination to it. Don’t try to make a bow contrary to that natural inclination. It won’t work. It’ll break. But if you take into consideration the natural inclination of that wood, you can make a bow that’s accurate, strong, and resilient, and that will last a lifetime. That’s the way you train up a child. There is no simple formula that you do A, B, and C, and you get the result. No sir. You look at that child and you see what their natural inclinations are. You’ve got a clue—you gave it to them. Right? As Brenda reminds me, “Dad, my Old Sin Nature, came from you.” [Laughter]. And it’s true. That’s so true. So you watch those inclinations. And you build into that child the things you wish you would have had growing up. Don’t give them the things you want them to have to make life easier, build into them the things that you needed to make your character stronger as you grew up; because that’s the information about the wood that’s going into making that bow. And that’s what Scripture tells us to do. “As the bow is bent,” train up that child. Stroke it, and sand it, and bend it, and moisten it, and dry it, and temper it, and string it. Use good tools and all it takes is about twenty or thirty years.

Gentleman. Most parents work on a schedule that's off on it fifteen or so years.

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right. Young couples – just starting with their child-raising, ask me, "how long does it take," you know, to get a child that responds, so and so. And I say, about twenty-four hours a day for about twenty years is a good start. Don't think you can shirk on that, because it won't work

Finally, be strong in the Lord.

It's nice in verse 10 that they put it there. Because after we're talking about training children and working with your employer, and dealing with your employees, and treating them all both ways, as the Lord treats you and as you want to be treated by Him, it gets down to verse 10 and it says,

Finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

Verse 10 is good advice, because at that point, patience is called for. And really, by that stage of life, you have learned to rest on the ground of peace.

Put on the full armor of God, that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes [and methods] of the devil.

This armor is for the Church in its battle, and that's what we're going to address in the Pastoral Epistles, because he goes on to develop that here for the Body of Christ in general. This verse we're familiar with,

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, powers, world forces of this darkness, against spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.

You will notice how many times the article "the" occurs. That means it's not talking about the *idea* of powers or the *idea* of world forces of darkness, but it's talking about *specific* entities. Rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places, all do exist. That's what the "the" is there for. THERE IS NO INDEFINITE ARTICLE IN THE GREEK. There's only the definite article. When the definite article is there, it calls attention to the make-up and presence of the noun. WHEN THE INDIFINITE ARTICLE IS NOT THERE, where we would use an "a" in English, IT CALLS ATTENTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE WORD. This calls attention to the specificity of the word. So, when it says "the" rulers, it's talking about a specific class of rulers that exists. And, if you get rulers

and powers and world forces of darkness against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places, what you have is a description of the hierarchy of demonic activity that exists under the rulership of Satan in opposition to everything I'm doing. And that's what that verse includes. It's not talking about a theoretical struggle. It's talking about a real struggle. Okay?

Now, with that in mind, "the devil made me do it" is not real for us. Satan himself opposes God before His face, and before His throne. Do not elevate yourself higher up the hierarchy of entities than you ought to be. The enemy himself is astounding in his capacity to do evil. Okay? The demonic forces at the lowest level are all you ever want to deal with. People who want to talk about coming face to face and dealing with Satan are off the deep end. They have no idea what they're dealing with. When Christ Himself refused to deal face to face with Satan, but referred him to Scripture; "thus it is written" is the answer of Christ. You want to be careful before you start putting a T-Shirt on that says, "Let's Kick Satan's Butt." That little bit of nonsense can lead to a thought process that will get you into the deepest spiritual water and entangled morass you ever imagined. Because its untrue. Scripture tells us we should speak the truth in everything, and we should live soberly. And that's what we have to do.

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you will be able to resist in the evil day [and the evil day is the day in which Satan is resisting God in the strongest possible way – we are approaching that day], and having done everything else, to stand firm. Stand firm, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

It's interesting that they include here with "gird your loins with truth," because that speaks of the reproductive power of each one of us. So it brings home our responsibility to our children first, Then it brings home our responsibility to our spiritual children next. When you bring someone to the Lord, you don't really do them a favor in terms of bringing comfort to their lives. You bring comfort to their souls. But you introduce them to a life that now is threatened with difficulty, because that's what the Lord says to expect. You introduce them to a life of testing. We have gone through a period of relative ease and affluence in this country that has conditioned the Church in the worst possible way. Where is the Church gaining the most converts most? It is in the Sudan. In China. In those places where Christians are being persecuted and killed. That's where the Church is gaining converts. Where is it losing ground? It is here, among the affluent segment of society; right? And it's because we've plushed ourselves in.

We are too comfortable. We are just too insulated from needs. We don't realize that the plushest thing in the world is the inside of a coffin. If you didn't know it was a coffin, you could lay down there and go to sleep in real comfort. Just ease and rest. Jacque?

Jacque Craig. [Offers a comment about missionaries and people in China and other places, and the first thing they say is, they wish we would stop praying that the persecutions stop, because they understand that is what is growing the Church].

Conrad Bowman. And that speaks of people who are living, as the Brethren would put it, in the *spiritual intelligence* of the day. The sure knowledge of persecution is what brings that dependence on God and converts. And we don't know anything about it in this country. We simply don't know anything about it. Our last two hundred years has just crippled us as a Church, absolutely. So we need to make sure we stay in touch with that. You know, when the missionaries come through here – I'm never, ever, ever jealous of the time that we give up in this class to hear what these missionaries have to tell us about what they're doing and what they're faced with. We need to know that, because they're introducing us to exactly that organization of opposition back in verse 12; "Spiritual wickedness in high places, and rulers of this darkness." They're on the front lines and we are behind the lines, so to speak. The truth is that we have been taken already in silence, without a shot being fired. Often, they are on the front line where the battle rages. Where lives are being lost, and souls are being saved.

So, you gird your loins with truth, because everything we sow has to be seeded in truth. We put on the breastplate of righteousness because that covers our heart. Okay.

We shod our feet with the preparation for the gospel of peace.

We "shod our feet" because with our feet, we move on the ground of peace. What is this ministry that we've been given? Paul says it— we have been given the **Ministry of Reconciliation**. God bless you, here it is. **Reconciliation!** And reconciliation means that God holds nothing to be charged to our account. He is totally satisfied with the payment that's been made. He is not asking anything from us. He is pleased when we give Him our lives in return! He does not need our production. He does not need our efforts. He's after our life. If He's got our life, then the work He's already done and pre-ordained and performed for us in Christ, we can walk in. That's what He wants from us. If He has our life and

we're walking in the work that He's already completed, Christ will shine. The Lord from heaven, on His throne, ruling over the rulers of darkness, is what will be evident in everything we do and everything we say. If we don't do that and fail to move onto that ground of peace, we're going to still communicate that God wants something from those who need salvation, and we have got to guard against that. **He doesn't want anything from them, but THEM.** It's all done for them. **He doesn't want anything from us, except to walk in light of the works He's already performed.** That's tough. That's really tough. How many of you think that you're doing that today? How many of us think that we're doing that today, even occasionally, even part time? You were talking about part time jobs with full time efforts. This is what we're talking about. Do you know how much of our life is characterized by that error? We should be walking in the light of the work that He's already performed, and just stepping through those things and seeing the results fall all around you. If you're like me, you're privileged, on rare occasions, to be able to look around you and see the result of the work of God that's touching your life even in the slightest way, and you're privileged to be on site when that happens. He reaches out to your life, and touches somebody else and draws them closer to Himself; they may not even have been aware of anyway that you were involved in that process. But He blesses you by letting you be on-site when He does that and lets you see it happen. That's the greatest blessing in the world for a believer. There's nothing any higher that you could ever aspire to. He didn't call us to do great things, and see millions, or hundreds, or even dozens come to Him through us or by means of our witness. What He did was call us, just to stand firm, it says. Put the armor on. Walk in the light. And then watch Him work. Do you remember three little stones and a sling-shot. David didn't declare himself to be great. He declared God to be great, when he let fly with one of those small stones, and the giant fell. And David was privileged to be on site and watch this happen. That's one story out of the Old Testament. That's the story of the whole Bible. That's the story of the book. .

Now, stand firm, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, breastplate of righteousness, feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace [because we are at peace with God. In addition to everything else] take up the shield of faith with which you are able to extinguish ALL the flaming missiles of the evil one.

"Fiery darts" it says in the King James. To extinguish all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation [because you're sealed in Him] and the sword of the Spirit [which is that two edged sword, that offensive weapon of the army] which is the Word of God.

Now remember, when it says "Word of God," it's not talking about this [Conrad holds up a Bible]. We have this [the Bible] today, we can hold it and caress it. It's talking about the revealed Word of God, but they didn't have the canon of Scripture in that day.

The Word of God, with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit.

What did Tom emphasize over and over—it is the importance of, the central position of prayer this morning. If we could just take in everything he was saying and doing, then we will have to be a praying people. And by praying people, it doesn't mean to assault God with a list of requirements and needs. It means to come constantly before the throne of grace with our thanksgiving for what He has already done for us. With our thanksgiving for the light in which we stand. For the ground of peace on which we rest. For the Ministry of Reconciliation that He's entrusted to us, and for the gifts in our life of one another. I can't imagine being anywhere else, at this time in my life. I just can't imagine it.

My brother called the other day and we were talking, and he said, I need help in California with my store, why don't you close down in Houston and come here. Just shut down and come here. I've got a job. I've got a house. You can move into my house. I'm buying a house across the street. The house is here, the job is here, and Norma can work here as much as she wants. It's – you walk across the street to the office. And you can go five blocks and you'll be at the beach.

Gentleman. I'll go. [Hearty laughter].

Conrad Bowman. What else do you want? What else do you want? He said, do you have anything that's holding you – do you have anything that's holding you in Houston?

Well, there are a couple of things. And you're it. I can't imagine being anywhere else right now.

Lady. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. You know, I just can't imagine that. God has put us here, and He's filling our life full here, with challenges and opportunities just to trust Him daily. And, when you're in a settled frame of mind about things, you're at peace. You're on that ground of peace.

So, with all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. Pray on my behalf that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

What does he pray for? He doesn't pray for relief. He doesn't pray for provision. He prays for boldness. Right? He said, you open me up so that I'll be constant in unfolding the mystery of the Gospel,

...for which I am an ambassador in chains that [“that” introduces purpose, the purpose of] proclaiming that I may speak boldly [as I ought to speak], but that you also may know about my circumstances, and how I am doing. Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and you may have comfort in your hearts. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, with a love that's incorruptible.

And that's the way he closes that letter to the Ephesians. Are there any questions?

[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].