

# Be Strong in the Lord I

(Hope)  
Fred R. Coulter

*How to be strong in the Lord!* This is going to become more and more important for us as we go down in time toward the return of Christ. The thing that is going to see us through is *being strong in the Lord*.

Let's see something that really applies to our day in a very important way, because we have all the comforts that we have today, and all the conveniences and everything around us is just right there. I thought about it when I got up this morning and I wanted a real cold glass of water. We had a bottle of water in the refrigerator, and I pulled it out and poured a cold glass water.

I thought: we have water running into the house and we have drinking water delivered to the house. Here's this refrigerator, it's got everything in it. And if that's not enough, we have two freezers for extra things and we have another refrigerator, which has more things in it. Then we have an auxiliary refrigerator down in the garage for little things that we keep there for the 'poochy-poops,' because we feed them turkey hotdogs. That's why we have the cleanest clean dogs in the world. They don't eat unclean food, and they've never had a case of worms. Think about that!

I got to thinking: look at this, everything is at our fingertips. We want light, *switch!* We want water, *the faucet.* If we want something from a faraway country we go to the supermarket. When we want to go someplace, we saddle up our car and take off. We don't have to have a donkey or a horse or go by foot. Lo and behold, we get in our cars and we sit there; you can have it outside 120 degrees and you're tooling along down the road in an air-conditioned car, and it's about 75 degrees. If that's too warm turn it down to 65 degrees. If you want to enjoy yourself, turn on some music, put on a CD and listen to music. If you want to listen to the news you listen to that. Every pleasure is right there at our fingertips.

Likewise at home we have all the gadgets and so forth. You can tell how Laodicean we are by the number of gadgets that we have. You don't have to get up and do anything. You can sit there using your remote control and click! They even have it now where you don't even need any keys. When they get *the mark of the beast* everything will be fixed up for *the mark of the beast*. You just go along and pass your hand before the door and the door opens. They will even have things where you will not need any remote controls. You can just sit there

and think about it; if you have a chip in your head, you can make it work!

So, with all of these things, and man approaching how man should consider it, and maybe even how people in past ages would look upon it. If you resurrected someone say from the 700<sub>S.A.D.</sub>, or maybe the 700<sub>S.B.C.</sub> and bring them into our society today, they'd be scared to death, first of all because of the cars. They wouldn't know what those things would be. If you've got them on a plane, they would wonder what kind of 'bird' this was. They wouldn't understand all the modern conveniences, they would be in awe with the lights and hot water; just turn it on. They would be in awe of all these things, and they would conclude you must be gods!

But with this kind of living comes complacency and sin and acceptance of it. Let's look at the parable of the ten virgins. Here's a warning for us today. If this is not describing the difference between those who are diligent and those who are lazy, I don't know which parable does.

Several have asked me why, with *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*, why don't you do red letters? Well red creates a problem in printing, and red gives a false illusion that those are the only meaningful words that we need to follow. A lot of people would do that. You also need to realize, that every 'jot and tittle,' though not spoken by God, is *God inspired*. So, I think putting it in red letters would defeat the purpose of having all of the Word of God together. Some people may disagree with me on that, but nevertheless, I think that that has some merit to it.

Matthew 25:1—these are the words of Jesus: "Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be compared to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom."

A lamp can be the Word of God; 'Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and Your statutes are a light unto me.' So, all of those of us who are in the Church have Bibles. How many use them to read and to study? *Continuously! Daily!* Jesus said, 'The words that I speak to you they are Spirit and they are Life' (John 6), which then is all the Word of God. So, they went out to meet the bridegroom.

Verse 2: "And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. The ones who were foolish took their lamps, but they did not take oil with them" (vs 2-3).

The lamps symbolize the Bible and oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. They were not using the words of God—which are Spirit and Life—with the Holy Spirit to develop the character that they need. They had no reserve. It's important to understand; we have to have a reserve. We need to realize that.

Verse 4: “But the wise took oil in their vessels *along* with their lamps.” A vessel means *a container, a bottle*. They had a bottle of oil with them so when they needed it, they could pour it into the little lamp. The lamps were much like seashells that you could put a little oil in there, and the wick would come over on the side and you light the wick and it would draw the oil out. Of course, over a short period of time you'd need to put more oil in it. This is something that we need to understand, too, because with the Spirit of God we need to be renewed daily. We need to be renewed every Sabbath, need to be renewed every Holy Day. That's what the oil in the lamp is all about.

Verse 5: “Now, when the bridegroom was gone a long time, they all became drowsy and slept.” We're right at this point, because it looks like there's going to be more time than we've anticipated.

Dolores and I, after we were married, moved over to Boise, we were driving in the car one day and we looked at each other and we said, ‘Hey were not getting old!’ Because we thought Jesus was coming in 1975, and we got married in 1965, and this was, I think, May 1965. We said ‘Hallelujah, we're not going to get old!’

So, here we are now 40-plus years later. And if you look at some of my old videos, you can see my skunk streak down the middle of my hair; now it's a totally white. So, we don't know how long it's going to be. Because of that, you get drowsy, you get sleepy, you get lazy. You don't have time for prayer; you don't have time for study. Which is like saying, ‘God, You save me, but I don't have any time for You. However, when trouble comes You better rescue me!’ Well, we're going to see that that's not so.

Verse 6: “But in *the* middle of *the* night there was a cry...”

What happens if you're awakened in the middle of the night? You're in a deep sleep, your eyes are heavy, and you wake up with a start. You wonder what's going on. This is illustrative of the fact that ***things will happen when you least expect them!*** Is that not right?

“...‘Look, the bridegroom is coming! Go out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps” (vs 6-7).

We've had false alarms, and everybody was diligent up to the time that it should have been. What happened in 1844-45 when the SDAs and Miller were wrong in the return of Christ? *You talk about not understanding prophecies!* Wow! They were out there standing all day. Some of them were on top of rocks, on top of stumps and they had their hands in the air, praying, ‘O Lord, take me up, take me up, take me up.’

We had a lot of people preaching fire, hell and brimstone, when it looked like Jesus was going to come in 1975. A lot of people zoomed into the Church to save their necks, because there was a way of escape to go to the place of safety: Petra.

So, this is illustrative of what happens when men have it wrong, and people trust in men. But what happened? *1972 and 75 came and went!* Then what happened? *Things began to settle down and get corrupt!* That's what he's talking about here. And then when it gets down to the pinch:

Verse 7: “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.” ‘We have to get ready. I have to pray. I haven't been praying for three years, but if I pray 20 minutes a day for the next month, I'm in good shape.’ But they found out that's not enough, because they didn't know.

Verse 8. “And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, because our lamps are going out.’”

The only way that you retain oil in your vessel, is that you pray and you study and you live God's way *every single day!* That doesn't mean you aren't going to have troubles, because it says that they all slumbered and slept:

Verse 5: “Now, when the bridegroom was gone a long time, they all became drowsy and slept.” Showing that everyone has their problems and weaknesses, but you don't let them get you down.

But the five foolish saw that they had lost a lot, so they wanted to get it from the wise. You can't do it. You can't do this like jumping the car when you have a dead battery. You can't put jumper cables. You can't put jumper cables on someone's ears, and put them on someone else's ears, and by magic transfer all that information to the one who's deficient so that now you have all of what the other person has. *You can't do it!*

Verse 9: “But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest *there* not *be* enough for us and *for* you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’”

What this means and shows is that there is an individual responsibility for everyone who has

the Spirit of God and who is a true Christian, *they have to be responsible for their own lives!* Not the minister! We're going to see here in a little bit, the minister is to teach the people *how* to live their lives, not live their lives vicariously for them and always tell them what to do, because this also leads to another problem, which is this: If you always rely on a minister to tell you what to do and he's willing to do that:

1. he is not a good minister
2. you do not put yourself in a position to be led of the Holy Spirit of God so you can *make your own decisions*

That becomes very important to understand. And you see why that this parable is here, because we're going to also see that there a lot of ministers and brethren who are derelict in their standing before God, because:

- they are more interested in pleasing people and one another
- they are more interested in their social contact with brethren

rather than standing for the Truth, even if no one else is around.

I've had a lot of people say, 'We go to our church, but we get spiritually fed from Fred.' That's like standing where there is a crack right between your feet, with one foot on one side and one foot on the other side. What are you going to do? It's like in California and all of a sudden there are earthquakes and the crack goes apart, and there you are? If you're lucky, it will only spread far enough for you to do an extreme version of the splits. But otherwise you're going to fall into the cavern. Remember the story of the splits: *The minister is not going to be split for you so you can be saved!* Remember that!

They are going to be a lot of people that are going to come at the last minute and say, 'Teach me, teach me! Let me learn let me learn!' Well, we'll be able to give to them. We'll say, 'You want to know? Here is an iPod with 1600 sermons on it; have a go at it. Here are 20 books that we have done that explain all about it; have a go at.' And maybe if they get in and work hard, and listen long and diligently, they may be able to get enough oil to avoid the problem.

But we can also look at this on a generational basis, too. We have the older generation, and we have the younger generation. And the younger generation is feeding off the older generation and relying on them for things, rather than the younger generation. So, all you young people out there—let's say 40 and younger—you better get your act together. You better decide *what*

you're going to do; you better decide *how* you're going to live your life. Quit relying on the older generation. Now, we're going to be kind and good and help you in every way that we can, but the help is not a substitute for your own work and getting things done that you need to get done.

There's going to come a day, and this applies to all of these 'good Protestants' who are expecting to be raptured, and many in the Church of God expecting to go to a place of safety.

Verse 10: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut." When the tribulation breaks, they're going to say, 'I thought I was going to be raptured away! I thought I was going to go to Petra!' *No!*

Verse 11: "And afterwards the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But He answered *and* said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you'" (vs 11-12).

You have to go out and give your life for God so that He knows you. He will know you by your works. If you want to wait to the last minute for works, your day will come, and the last minute will be upon you.

What do we do between now and then? *We still don't know how long it is to the end!* I read a paper about the latest NASA moon project. They're going to send a rocket to the moon, crash it deliberately toward the south pole of the moon and have another part of the rocket land four minutes later.

When the first one lands it plumes up the dust and everything, which will make a crater 30 feet wide and 15 to 16 feet deep. They're looking for water, which may be frozen in some of the craters. With the dust they're gathering for four minutes on the second one before it crashes, that will send all the information to NASA so they can go up there and build their base. They expected to do this in 2009. You tie that together with the thing that says, 'there will be war in heaven'; that's not just Satan alone. Satan has to use people, so there will be people there.

How much time do we have left, and if we have much more time, what is our attitude toward growing and overcoming? *I know exactly how human nature is! I have human nature myself!* I exercise 3 to 5 times a week, and when I feel really on top of it, boy I'm there really doing it. But when I'm not on top of it, my human nature says, 'Well you don't have to do quite as much. You really did a lot yesterday. So, it's the same way with everything.'

Today we don't buy things until we need it. Very few people have things in storage. Now we have some, perhaps more than other people. But nevertheless, even all the things we have in storage, just say for example you can't buy food at the supermarket for 60 days, we would be out of food, easily. Even with all the things that we have.

Whereas, when people had to depend on growing their own food, taking care of their own animals making sure that they had it for what, a whole year! That was a different story. Then when they faithfully followed the 'land Sabbath,' the crop of the sixth year would be for three years. And they could eat at the sixth and the seventh and the eighth year, until the crop came in that they planted at the eighth year, which then would be harvested in the ninth year.

None of us have any of that mentality at all. I know I don't! When I get gas, I wait for the gas tank to go way down. When Delores is with me, she always reminds me. 'Look at how low that gas is! 'Oh, no! I'll get gas in plenty of time.' Well what would happen if I got really, really low, and the gaslight was on and I pulled into a station, and it was the last place I could go, and they were out of gas? Now what am I going to do?

This is how we live our lives. Unfortunately this is how we live our lives spiritually, too! Jesus knew how people would live their lives; even ministers and disciples and apostles!

Let's see what Jesus told Peter. This is really a good example of how we can have so much self-confidence that we become filled with pride and cockiness and think we know everything. Thus was Peter. He even had so much confidence that when Jesus said He had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the priest and the elders, and be killed the third day, Peter came up to Him and took him to the side began to correct him, and say, 'Lord, that's not going to happen; *because I am here!*' (Matt. 16).

Who was the one who took the sword and *hacked off the ear of the servant of the high priest? Peter!* You can rest assured he was not aiming for the ear! He got the ear because the guy turned his head down, and the sword sliced off his ear. Of course, Jesus put it back on and healed him. And I bet that that soldier was there all night feeling his ear feeling his ear. Is it bleeding? How did it get back?

I wonder what he thought when they crucified Jesus. I wonder if he was converted on the Day of Pentecost. Makes you wonder; very possible. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them for they don't know what they're doing.' Here is a great lesson to learn.

Luke 22:25<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: "And He said to them, 'The kings of the nations lord over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.'"

Look at any two-bit dictator: Chavez, Castro, Hussein, Hitler, Stalin, Mao tse Tung, Mussolini, and on back into all of the Caesars and clear back to Nimrod who started the system.

Verse 26: "But *it shall* not be this way *among you...*" Everyone who is an elder and teacher listen up! Especially those who run their church corporations with an *iron* fist of hate, and yet, claim they are the 'church of brotherly love.' Watch out, your day of judgment is coming!

"...rather, let the one who is greatest among you be as the younger, and the one who is leading as the one who is serving" (v 26).

We are called to serve the brethren: to teach them, to help them so they may obtain eternal life, and that they may be *spiritually strong* in an independent way to spiritually stand before God on their own two feet, and have confidence, faith, hope and love.

Verse 27: "For who *is* greater, the one who is sitting *at the table*, or the one who is serving? *Is* not the one who sits *at the table*? But I [Christ] am among you as One Who is serving."

- Did He not wash their feet?
- Did He not tell them to do this one to another? *Yes!* Why?

*because*

- the servant is not greater than his Lord
- the disciple is not greater than his teacher
- the messenger is not greater than the one who is sent

Verse 28: "Now, you are the ones who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, a kingdom; so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (vs 28-30). What greater thing could you get? *Yet, this was not enough for Peter!*

Verse 31: "Then the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, listen *well*. Satan has demanded to have all of you, to sift as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and **when you are converted, strengthen your brethren**'" (vs 31-32).

That's what every minister, elder and teacher needs to do: *strengthen the brethren!* You can trust God in this: ***If you are not strong in the Lord, you're not going to strengthen the brethren!*** So, here's Peter, 'Lord, I don't need that!'

Verse 33: “And he said to Him, ‘Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death.’ But He said, ‘I tell you, Peter, *the* cock shall in no wise crow today before you have denied knowing Me three times” (vs 33-34).

Did that happen? *Yes it did!* That’s why Jesus said to reaffirm. This is another thing that is very important. This is why Jesus wanted to reaffirm what He told Peter: *to strengthen the brethren*. This was after He was resurrected and He appeared to them at the Sea of Galilee.

John 21:14: “This *was* now the third time *that* Jesus revealed Himself to His disciples after being raised from *the* dead... [they were all out there fishing; they really didn’t know what to do] ...Therefore, when they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me more than these?’ ...” (vs 14-15). He said this three times because Peter denied him three times.

“...*And* he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs’” (v 15).

How do you feed lambs? Have you ever had a lamb? We had a lamb one time up in Salt Lake City and we thought it’d be a great pet. It was. So, we got this little lamb that had to be bottle-fed. We had a place that we could keep it out in the yard. Our kids were real little at that time, and we would go out and feed the lamb. We would have this bottle with a big nipple on it, and we’d give it to the lamb. He would almost invert the bottle, sucking so hard on it.

Wherever you would go the lamb would follow you. Just like the old tale about ‘Mary had a little lamb’ and so forth. Well, you didn’t have to be Mary, all you had to do is be the bottle carrier. He followed you wherever it would go. As it got older it demanded to come in the house, because we would feed it, run into the house and shut the screen door, which was aluminum screen door with a glass on it. And this lamb would come up, and it would jump up and kick the bottom of the door to get more! It wanted to be fed.

Which ties in with what? What should our attitude be in learning? What did Jesus say? ***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled!*** Now when they get older, you have to give them other things to eat. So He said, ‘Feed My lambs.’

Verse 16: “He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’ *And* he said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Shepherd My sheep.’”

Shepherding is not *ruling over*. Shepherding is *leading* them to follow Christ, because Christ is *the Chief Shepherd!* Peter learned that lesson.

Verse 17: “He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, *son* of Jonas, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things. You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep.’”

Every time any minister or elder gets all uplifted in what he is doing, he better go back and read this. Another thing, too, is that very few of them have as good a wife as mine, because if I am not doing this, she will well let me know. That’s why she always says to me before I speak, she has burned a little place in my brain: Fred, just talk!

Did Peter strengthen the brethren? *Yes, he did!* You read what he did in Acts 2-10. Then you find that, yes:

- he did learn the lesson
- he did strengthen the brethren
- he did teach them
- he was an apostle to the circumcision

We find at the end of 1-Peter 5, that Peter was in Babylon. Why was he in Babylon? That’s not Rome! That’s the city of Babylon over there and in what we call Iraq today. Why was he in Babylon? *Because there are more Jews in Babylon than there were in Judea!* He was over there teaching the Jews. So, he writes this letter:

1-Peter 5:1: “*The* elders who *are* among you I exhort, even as a fellow elder, and an *eyewitness* of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that is about to be revealed”—because he saw Jesus transfigured.

Verse 2: “Feed the flock of God *that* is among you... [Did Peter learn the lesson? *Yes, he did!*] ...exercising oversight... [not over-lordship, there’s a difference] ...not by compulsion, but willingly; not in fondness of dishonest gain, but *with an eager attitude*; not as exercising lordship over *your* possessions... [these people belong to me] ...but *by* being examples to the flock *of* God. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you shall receive an unfading, *eternal* crown of glory” (vs 2-4).

So he *did* learn the lesson and that’s what he taught and preached. He is to strengthen the brethren. That’s what we need to do here. How are we strengthened?

- we need to be strengthened with *God’s Spirit*

- strength and steadfastness are always related to *hope*

Let's see what Paul said about hope. This kept Paul going all his life. In teaching, helping, writing and doing the things that he did in spite of trials and in spite of difficulties. You can read all the things that he went through (2-Cor. 11). Go back and read those. Read all of 2-Cor. Go through all the things that Paul went through, and many of them even life-threatening, and even to the point he said that it was so bad we despaired even of living! Then ask yourself:

- Would you endure that and still remain faithful?

**or**

- Are you a 'fair weather' Christian?

That as long as everything is right and 'I have all my gadgets and all of my remote controls and everything convenient, I'm going to be a good little Christian. But I don't know about what I'm going to be when the going gets tough.' Then you better answer the question before the going gets tough. What are you going to be? *That you have to be strengthened in order to do it!*

So, here's what Paul said when he was falsely accused, arrested and drug on down to Caesarea to stand trial. All false charges in everything against him, and he stood up to speak for himself. He said to the governor down there:

Acts 24:14: "But I confess to you that according to the way, which they call heresy..."

- the Jews **to this day** call it heresy
- the Catholics **to this day**, following in the footsteps of the Jews (except for Sunday-keeping), call it heresy

Their contempt for true Christians is so absolutely incredible. Now that's not to say other Sunday-keeping Christians buy into the Catholics because the pope has declared them 'persona non grata'—*non-Catholics* can't be true Christians.

"...so I serve the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets" (v 14).

***You cannot have true hope unless you understand what the prophets went through and their message!*** You will never be able to endure the miserable terrible times that are coming, unless you understand what they went through.

Verse 15: "Having hope in God, which they themselves also acknowledge, *that there* will be a resurrection of *the* dead—both *the* just and *the* unjust.' And in this *hope*, I exercise myself to have a

conscience without offense toward God and men continually" (vs 15-16).

Notice what he has to do. He has hope! he believes! What does he do? *He exercises himself!* How?

- through prayer
- through study
- through living
- through preaching
- through teaching

That's how *we* need to exercise our lives as ministers and elders, and all brethren also need to exercise themselves. This is spiritual exercise:

- of prayer
- of study
- of living
- of being an example to others

That's all part of it. That's how we do it. It kept him through everything, through the thick and through the thin.

Let's look at some *hope*, where it talks about *hope and strength*. I'll tell you this, which is true. All those who believe the Law and the Prophets have been done away, they don't read the Old Testament because they are told that everything in the Old Testament has been fulfilled.

Well, if it's been fulfilled, why read it? *So, they don't learn the things in the Old Testament!* They missed the whole unity of the Scripture, as God designed it to be. If you read all of Psa. 119 *there is no way in heaven and earth that you could possibly believe that the laws have been done away;* that the statutes, the commandments, the precepts and testimonies of God and the Word of God have been done away.

Psalm 119:49: "Remember the Word to Your servant upon which You have caused me to **hope.**" We're hoping in the resurrection, the return of Christ, the Kingdom of God. We're *hoping* for the blessing of the reward that God will give us, to reign kings and priests.

So, hope always causes you to keep your mind on the goal that God has for us. When you do that, that will give you the diligence to exercise yourself spiritually every day.

(go the next track)

Psa. 119 is important to understand. It is important to grasp. There are differences between positive attitudes. People can have positive attitudes and hope. Hope gives you a positive attitude *spiritually*, because you're trusting in God. Whereas, a positive attitude without God is something you work up in yourself. When it comes to 'crunch

time,' it may not be there. It can be like 'pop' psychology.

Listen! Satan can give anybody a positive attitude. Think on that! He can make them feel really good. There is what appears to be a good side, a tender side and an understanding side *that Satan deceptively portrays to ensnare people!* He has many willing accomplices out there, who are 'do-gooders.' So, just remember the difference between, true hope and just a positive attitude.

Here is what true hope is going to do, and we're going to need it for the days ahead. I'm going to tell you *why* you need to be strong in the Lord, and what is really going to come down in fulfilling prophecy. Unless you're *strong in the Lord*, you're not going to understand. *You're going to have a greater and more difficult time having faith in God, and enduring the difficulties that are coming!* It doesn't mean that you can't, but remember where we started with the parable of the ten virgins, the five wise and the five foolish.

Psalm 119:50: "This is my comfort..." That is, *the hope!* Hope gives comfort in all circumstances. And we have the comfort of the Holy Spirit, which will get into a little later.

"...in my affliction..." (v 50). Whenever you have a trial, whenever you have an affliction, God's Word and God's promises *causes you to hope in Him Who sees you through all your afflictions and gives you comfort!* Another way of saying it is, it gives you *peace of mind*. That's what you need in times of difficulty, *peace of mind*, regardless of what's going on.

"...that Your Word has given me life" (v 50)—'quicken' (KJV)—to enliven or to give you *living strength*.

Notice the things that he was up against. *Regardless of your circumstances, if you have the hope in God, you're going to be stronger!*

Verse 51: "The proud have utterly scorned me..." Now that could also be a prophecy of Jesus. Everybody hated Him.

"...yet, I do not turn aside from Your Law" (v 51). That's quite something! Never let the pressure from anyone cause you to turn your back on the laws of God.

Verse 52: "I remembered Your judgments of old..." That's why it's important to read the Old Testament. You read what God has promised in *blessings* and what God has promised in *cursings*, and the cursings are judgment for sin and transgression. When you remember the judgments of

old, for good and for evil, then you know which ones to choose.

"...O LORD, and have comforted myself" (v 52). The Holy Spirit will do that. That's why it's important to study the Word of God.

- it gives you comfort
- it gives you hope
- the words are Spirit and Life

That's why *the Sabbath needs to be made the greatest day of the week* by everyone participating into it—the teachers, elders and all the brethren together, *as well as the Spirit of God*—because God puts His Spirit, in wherever two or three are gathered together, and He teaches us. The Sabbath should be a day of:

- education
- hope
- teaching
- learning to walk in God's way

so that *the Sabbath truly becomes the greatest day of the week!*

1. because of your fellowship is with God
2. the teaching that you get from His Word
3. then the fellowship that you give, which should be in love

Too many people have the fellowship as the first thing. Then everything else becomes a social mix.

Notice how bad it can get *and you still have hope*, v 53: "Burning indignation has taken hold upon me because of the wicked who forsake Your Law."

He loved God's Law so much that he was horrified to see what was happening! Listen, brethren! I am horrified at what I see happening with a lot of those we considered brethren years ago. Where are they! What has happened?

Verse 54: "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.... [we're just pilgrims and sojourners] ...I have remembered Your name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept Your Law. This I had because I kept Your **precepts**" (vs 54-56).

Verse 127: "**Therefore, I love Your commandments above gold—yea, above fine gold. Therefore, I esteem all Your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way**" (vs 127-128)

There is a proper hatred of sin! We need to understand that we have to hate those things, not imbibe in them just a little bit because it's there. In this age, it is much more difficult for us than in ages past, because Satan the devil has many, many helpers bringing *his way* into every nook and cranny

of every home, every apartment, everything that there is in the world.

A lot of things are snuck in on the premise that Fox News has: 'fair and balanced.' Well let's understand something clearly, **God is not fair and balanced!** He does not give equal time to sin. Let's put it this way: Yes, He does, because **He punishes as 'equal time' with sin. But He blesses because of love and obedience.**

Let's see what it says about Jesus, and He was commended for this, prophesied that He would come as the Messiah. This also has to do with how things are going to be run during the Millennium.

Hebrews 1:8: "But on the other hand, of the Son *He says*, 'Your throne, O God...'" Was Jesus God? *Yes!* This is prophesied going clear back to Psa. 45. The Messiah, before He came in the flesh, was called God. In Isa. 9 He is called the 'Mighty God.'

"...is into the ages of eternity; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.... [What is the rule of that?]; You loved righteousness and hated lawlessness... [iniquity] ...because of this, God, *even* Your God, has anointed You with *the* oil of gladness above Your companions" (vs 8-9).

There is a blessing and a reward, for hating evil, iniquity and lawlessness. It is hard for us to do so in this society, because we are living in a lawless society. The powers that be in the government and religions have compelled upon the societies to compromise with Truth and righteousness, and to accept sin on an equal basis, because you must be 'fair and balanced.'

Let's see how Paul is writing Colossians; you almost have to read the whole thing to get it all, but we don't have time for that. What I want you to understand is that Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are the three most loving and spiritual Epistles of Paul. They were written by him when he was imprisoned in Rome; his first imprisonment, which was in a house, but nevertheless, he was still in chains.

Colossians 1:3: "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you continually since hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the love that *you have* toward all the saints; because..." (vs 3-5). The reason your behavior is what it is, is because of *the hope!* You have to have that *hope!*

"...of the hope that *is* laid up for you in heaven... [which is coming when Christ returns] ...which you heard before in the word of the Truth of the Gospel; which has come to you, even as *it* also

*has* in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, just as *it is* among you, from the day that you heard and knew the grace of God in Truth" (vs 5-6).

Verse 8: "Who has also informed us of your love in **the Spirit.**" Very important!

- there is a *carnal love*
- there is a *social love*, of just getting along with people
- there is a *religious love*, which may be above social love
- there is a *spiritual love*, which is the love that comes from God

*Spiritual love* is what we are to have. *Love in the Spirit.* So, it is the Spirit to give us *faith, hope and love.*

Verse 9: "For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you..." Brethren, I pray for you every day:

- prayers for those who are sick and in need
- special prayers for those who are in trials
- special prayers for those who have afflictions and difficulties

*Every day!*

"...and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (v 9). Paul didn't want them looking to him for every itty-bitty, teeny-weeny thing. To be "**...be filled...in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.**" For what? *So they can make their own decisions! So they can live their own lives!*

Verse 10: "That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and **growing in the knowledge of God.**" What does that do?

Let me stop here and just say this: There are things that we know, but God wants us to come to the point of **knowing that we know!** There is a distinct difference! If you just know, someone could possibly talk you out of that. But if you *know* that you *know*, *no one's going to take it from you!*

I'll show you what we mean, I will show you the difference. This is important to understand, because this will distinguish between *true Christians* and those who are *false or pseudo-Christians*, and there are many of them out there. You can tell who they are by just listening to them talk. Not too far in their conversation they're going to let you know that the laws and commandments of God have of been done away. Those who believe that are *false Christians.*

Now, they may have a pseudo-love. They may be very sanctimonious, they may be very enthused and what they are doing, **but they are false**



**Christians!** The sign of God is the true seventh-day Sabbath, not Sunday; Sunday never has. Today they have a lot of singers that have rock bands and so forth, so it's more of an emotional rock concert type of thing with the name of Jesus thrown in.

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard*..." I added the word *standard*, because the Greek there is 'en toutoo'—which means *by this*. You have to furnish the word as to what it is, because 'en toutoo' means '*by this*' and then the question is: What? So, you furnish the word.

Verse 3: "And by this *standard we know* that **we know** Him... [How do *we know* that *we know*?]: ...**if we keep His commandments.**" There you go!

I'll tell you one thing, ***you can never have spiritual strength unless you keep the commandments of God!*** God's Spirit is where there is obedience! God's Spirit is not where there is disobedience. It's God Spirit that gives us strength.

Verse 4: "The one who says, 'I know Him'..."

- I know the Lord!
- Brother, do you know the Lord?
- Welcome to our church on Sunday.
- Where do you live?
- Oh my, we have a wonderful band.
- Oh wait until you hear the choir.
- Wait until you see our preacher prance back and forth on stage, and purr a wonderful hymn to us.

**"...and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him"** (v 4).

What is Truth? *Jesus said, 'Your Word is the Truth!'* That's an all-inclusive statement. He didn't say, 'Almost all Your Word is the Truth. Well, 99% your Word is the Truth.' **NO!** He said, '***Your Word is the Truth.***'

In seeing a lot of these worship services where they're singing songs and their arms are in the air and swaying back and forth. Well, you can go to some Sunday-keeping churches, and they have 'praise singing' and they carry on for 45 minutes. Then they have a 10-minute sermon and they're done. All of this is an emotional participation to get you involved into it, and you are hooked emotionally. *First of all, God wants you to understand things spiritually and intellectually, then proper emotion comes.* The false way of the world is emotion first. Do you love the Lord in your heart? It's an emotion! 'Listen to our wonderful music.' And if you're in some churches, they have 'follow the bouncing ball'! And that's, I think, very hypnotizing.

The Psalms also indicate that you raise your arms to God, so there's a proper way of doing it and a proper emotion in doing it. But if you stand there waving your arms back and forth for 40 minutes, and singing these songs like the way that they sing them, you have to question if that really from God. The bottom line is that ***you have to keep the commandments of God,*** and it says ***the commandments of God are Truth!***

Verse 5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word... [we shift from commandments to 'word,' which then becomes all-inclusive] ...**truly in this one the love of God is being perfected**..."

Why? *Because this is the love of God that we keep His commandments!* Then this gives us the understanding on how to love each other, and love God, and so forth.

"...By this *means* we know that we are in Him.... [If someone says, 'Well, I'm a Christian! All right, here's a test]: ...**Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked**" (vs 5-6).

- Which day did Jesus keep? *The Sabbath Day!*
- Which Holy Days did He keep? *God's Holy Days!*
- Did He walk in love? *Yes!*
- Did He walk in Truth? *Yes!*
- Did He loved righteousness and hate iniquity? *Yes!*

That's how *we are to walk!*

Notice what all of this does when we put it all together. What does it do for us spiritually? ***We need to be strong in the Lord!***

Colossians 1:11: "Being strengthened with all power..." Whatever you need to see you through, whatever your circumstances are, ***God will give that!*** He will give it to you *when* you need it, provided that you're doing like the wise virgins.

"...according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy" (v 11). Regardless of what comes! Whenever it gets tough and you need to endure and things look like they're totally upside down and ought not be upside down, then remember the Scripture that says: ***all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose!*** Everything will work together for good.

Many times we don't see the good, until we come out on the other side of the trial and look back. Many times we can see God's hand in it *after* we have gone through it, when we couldn't necessarily

see it when we were going through it. I know I've experience that, and I know all of you have, too.

Verse 12: "Giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the Light." In other words, always keeping your mind on the goal. What is God going to do for you? *That's how you remain strong!*

Verse 13: "Who has personally **rescued us** from the power of darkness..." This is quite a verse because here in the Greek the word *rescued*, in the middle of voice verb, which means that God has had a personal hand in rescuing us from the power of darkness. So, in that you need to ask: **Why am I here in the Church of God?**

- understanding His Word
- understanding the light of God's Word
- understanding the Truth of God's Word

and you're not out *there*, that is in the world, in darkness? ***Because Christ rescued you!***

Think about that the next time you watch some of these spectacular rescues on television whether it's about a storm in the sea or flood, and you see some spectacular things take place.

"...and has transferred *us*... [we're not there, yet, but we are transferred] ...unto the kingdom of the Son of His love" (v 13). The *King James* says 'translated.' You haven't been translated, you been *transferred*. You are now under the authority of the Kingdom of God, and that's what it means. Then it goes on showing all about Christ. Let's go through this and read this. This becomes important when we come down to Col. 1:27, *the hope of glory*; you have seen the steps involved in building up to it.

You just don't come along and have hope because you say you have hope. NO! ***Hope is a concrete spiritual substance or power that God has given you so that in all circumstances you have hope!***

1. He has rescued us
  - He has given us knowledge
  - He has given us His power
2. He has rescued us from Satan the devil!
3. Verse 14: "In Whom we have redemption through his own blood... [we've been redeemed] ...even the remission of sins."

Not just going to a priest in some little dark closet, and you say, 'father I have sinned.' *My child what are your sins?* NO!

Verse 14: "In Whom we have redemption through His own blood, *even* the remission of sins; Who is *the* image of the invisible God... [Christ; *through Christ*] ...***the firstborn of all creation***" (vs 14-15).

That doesn't mean that He was the first created thing of God. Because if you're the first created thing you're not firstborn, and Jesus was not the first son of Adam and Eve. He couldn't of been their firstborn, but *He was the firstborn of the virgin Mary* was He not?

We are to follow Christ and become a spiritual creation through Christ. Christ was the Firstborn from among the dead for the creation of the sons of God that God is doing now. And that's what it means.

- How important is Christ?
- How important is it when we pray and study?

That's why we need to know who Christ was and who He is and what He's doing.

Verse 16: "Because by Him were **all** things created..." How can He be the firstborn if He created all things, if you're saying He was just born of the virgin Mary?

"...the things in heaven and the things on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And **He is before all, and by Him all things subsist**" (vs 16-17). 'He upholds all things by the word of His power' (Heb. 1).

Verse 18: "And He is the Head of the Body, the Church; Who is *the* Beginning, ***the Firstborn from among the dead***..." He was the beginning the firstborn of all who are created through the process of conversion and the resurrection. That's the whole meaning of it.

"...so that in all things He Himself might hold the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell" (vs 18-19).

Here's why we have *hope*, and it's not based on a positive attitude. It's based on:

- the Truth of God
  - the Word of God
  - the Spirit of God
- that gives us:*
- a hope
  - a strength
  - a determination
  - a spiritual conviction

*that comes no other way!* We're going to have to have that spiritual conviction.

Verse 20: "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, whether the things on the earth, or the things in heaven."

Here is where we begin to see how He is showing that we understand *the hope*, because we look back at where we have come from.

Verse 21: “For you *were* once alienated and enemies in *your* minds by wicked works; but now He has reconciled *you*... [reconciled you to God the Father] ...in the body of His flesh through death, to present you ... [this is the goal] ...Holy and unblamable and unimpeachable before Him” (vs 21-22). That’s accomplished by:

- the grace of God
- forgiveness
- remission
- redemption

all of those good things, but God wants us to be:

- Holy
- unblamable
- believable
- unimpeachable

*before Him!* That’s why in the sermon series The Keys to Answered Prayer, *every day we ask God to forgive us our sins!*

There is something we need to do, because we talked about *endurance* little earlier:

Verse 23: “If indeed you **continue**...”—which was a dividing line between the five wise and the five foolish virgins. The five wise continued, the five foolish did not.

“...in the faith grounded and steadfast... [if you’re steadfast, you’re strong in the Lord] ...and are not moved away from **the hope of the Gospel**...” (v 23).

What is “...the hope of the Gospel...”? ***Everlasting life in glory, to reign as king’s and priest with Christ!*** “...and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel...”

That has to come through the resurrection! That’s why all of those who believe in going to heaven, don’t understand the Truth of God. Ask them what *their hope* is. The hope of the Catholic is to make it to heaven, and to have a beatific vision of God, which is described as looking upon a bubbling mass of fire! Or looking at the sun! **NO!** How? *God has something concrete and real for you!*

Verse 23: “If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from **the hope of the Gospel**, which you have heard, **and which was proclaimed in all the creation that is under heaven**...” That is a prophetic statement reaching down to our time.

“...of which I, Paul, became a servant. Now, I am rejoicing in my sufferings for you... [you can have hope in suffering if you understand the goal] ...and I am filling up in my flesh that which is

behind of the tribulations of Christ... [Jesus told him how much He would have to suffer for him, to serve Him] ...for the sake of His body, which is the Church” (vs 23-24).

Notice how this ties in about everything that I’ve talked about in the sermon up to this point.

Verse 25: “Of which I became a servant, according to the administration of God that *was* given to me for you *in order* to complete the Word of God.” This tells us that he knew he was going to help finish writing the Word of God. That’s why we have 14 epistles from the Apostle Paul.

Verse 26: *Even* the mystery... [it’s only revealed to those who have the Spirit of God] ...that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but **has now been revealed to His saints.**”

Stop and think for just a minute about all that you understand about the Word of God, and:

- the hope
- why we are here
- the purpose of God
- the plan of God

All of these things that have been given to us in a really overwhelming way at the end. It wasn’t understood in ages past, it was gradually partly understood, but in the end-time we really understand it.

It reminds me of the joke about the evangelist who had an evangelistic campaign, and he had a tent meeting and there was a terrible storm, and only one man showed up. So, the evangelist decided to go ahead and preach to this one man in the full fury and power of his evangelizing. He got done and he went down and he talked to this one man—who happen to be a farmer who had his overalls on—and he said, ‘What did you think of the sermon?’ He said it was mighty powerful, but ‘you didn’t have to dump the whole load of hay on me’!

I think of it this way: Today, you can get the ‘whole load of hay,’ and you better be thankful that you can, and apply yourself to it.

Verse 27: “To whom God did will... [the purpose of God] ...to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is Christ in you**...” The very fact you have the Holy Spirit of God, is the greatest hope that there is because, you will be resurrected.

“...**the hope of glory**” (v 27). If we have that hope, ***there is nothing that can take us from God!*** ***There is nothing that can pull us away!*** We’ll see some other things next time, in how we can:

- strengthen our minds
- strengthen our hearts

- strengthen our thinking

Ask God to help us be able to *think!*

I remember that many years ago I was driving down the road. It was a time of great trial and difficulty in my life and for my wife and our family at that time. I was driving down the road, when I was a loan broker going out to look for loans—and cold call and solicit loans—and all that sort of thing. I remember praying. I just said, ‘O God,

- help me to think
- help me to think right

*so that I can understand!*

We all need to do that! We need to ask God to help us *to think* so we can:

- *think* with His Spirit
- *think* with His Word
- *think* with His Truth

***That gives us hope!***

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 25:1-8, 5, 9-12
- 2) Luke 22:25-34
- 3) John 21:14-17
- 4) 1 Peter 5:1-4
- 5) Acts 24:14-16
- 6) Psalm 119:49-56, 127-128
- 7) Hebrews 1:8-9
- 8) Colossians 1:3-6, 8-10
- 9) 1 John 2:3-6
- 10) Colossians 1:11-27

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 6
- Matthew 16
- Acts 2-10
- 2-Corinthians 11
- Isaiah 9
- Hebrews 1

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

*The Keys to Answered Prayer*

FRC:po/bo  
Transcribed:1/14/16