

Proclaiming and Humbling



The Enemies We Face (Part 18)
by Derek Prince

Paul goes on from there and he points out various other features at the close of the age, some we will return to perhaps later. He very clearly depicts a tremendous upsurge of the occult, which again is very conspicuous in our time, and then he comes to what I believe is God's answer at the end of chapter 3. Beginning in verse 16:

> "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

How much of Scripture? All. Are you sure? There are a lot of people not sure about that any longer. There are a lot of preachers that believe it is their job to straighten God out, edit the Bible, find out where it needs to be changed. That is not my attitude. I want to say, I believe:

> "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. So that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

I understand that to mean that for God's people to be thoroughly equipped, the whole truth of the Bible has to be presented to them, not just little passages. You have to know what is in the book of Ezra. You have to know the teaching of Amos. You have to understand the epistle to Philemon, because they are all necessary for you to be thoroughly equipped. You may have to take much less time in front of the television if you are going to be thoroughly equipped, because it is a pretty full-time job being thoroughly equipped for Christian service.

Now bear in mind the chapter divisions were not there from Paul, so Paul goes on in the next chapter, the first verse.

> "I charge you therefore... [What is the 'therefore' for? You've heard me say this. When you find a 'therefore,' you want to find out what it is there for. Because of what he had said in the end of chapter 3, then he comes to this tremendously solemn charge. Look at the

> words:] I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. [You could not have a more solemn charge than that. As it were in the presence of God and the light of the fact that we will all have to answer to Jesus at His judgment seat when He comes. So what's the message? Verse 2:] Preach the word. [Let's say that together, shall we? PREACH THE WORD.] Be ready in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching."

Let me ask you a frank question, you don't have to answer. How many of you go to church on Sunday morning expecting to be convinced, rebuked, and exhorted? Some of you would not go back to that church again if they treated you like that. But if the minister is doing his job that's what will happen to you. Now how true this is of the time in which we live!

> "For the time will come [I believe the time has come] when they will not endure sound doctrine but according to their own desires because they have itching ears. They will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables."

I think this is conspicuous in the Western church. There are many, many Christians who have to have a new doctrine and a new revelation, something new to tickle them and excite them. But that is not our job. Our job is to preach the Word. And so Paul concludes this section:

> "But you, [that's Timothy] be watchful in all things, endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."

I don't believe there has ever been a time when it is more important to hold fast to the absolute truth and authority of Scripture. It is being attacked and undermined in many quarters which we would not anticipate. Movements and churches and groups that we would consider to be sound in the faith have moved from that foundation in these last few decades.

Let me quote the words of Paul to you in Acts 20:27.

> "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."

I'm impressed by those words "I have not shunned" because it would indicate there is a lot of pressures that would cause you not to declare the whole counsel of God. Is that true? Social pressures, financial pressures, denominational pressures. If you want to be popular, it might easily be the quickest way not to declare the whole counsel of God. But remember that we are answerable ultimately to God. Paul said:

> "I'm pure from the blood of all men."

I think he was thinking in terms of God's word to Ezekiel:

> "I have made you a watchman to your people. If trouble is coming and you warn them and they don't listen, they will perish but you will have saved your soul. But if trouble is coming and you don't warn them, and they perish, their blood will be upon your hands."

And I think Paul said for that reason, "I'm pure from the blood of all men. No one's blood can be laid at my door because I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God."

The third requirement, I think, is very important and it is stated in 1 Peter, chapter 5:5–6.

> "Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. [Now, being over 70, of course I can say a hearty AMEN to that. But it does not end there. Yes, all of you, over 70 or over 50 or under 20.] All of you, be submissive to one another and be clothed with humility."

There has been a lot of talk in the church recently about submission and I believe submission has a scriptural basis. I point out to most people, what really matters about submission is submissiveness. You can be submissive even when you don't submit. It is the attitude rather than the code of conduct.

Peter says, "all of you be clothed with humility." That's a metaphor that does not come out in the English. The word he uses means "put on an apron of humility." And the word is used for an apron that was worn only by slaves. So when you had this apron on, everybody knew you were a slave. So he says, put on an apron, an attitude of humility, which shows you are the slave of everybody.

> "...because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, humble yourselves under the

> mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time."

I always point out to people, humility is not something God can do for us. God never says, "I will make you humble," but always says, "Make yourself humble." It is a decision; we have to make it.

And then, if you are interested, there is a remarkable example in Ezra, chapter 8, verses 21 to 23, of one specific way of humbling ourselves. Ezra and a party of exiles returning from Babylon to Jerusalem were confronted with a very dangerous journey that took them, I think, four months. They had with them all the precious vessels of the temple and their wives and their children, but Ezra refused a military escort from the Persian monarch and said, "We are going to trust God." He had to do that because he testified that God protected those who serve Him. See, that is one of the blessings of testifying, when you testify, you have to live up your testimony. So he did not ask for a band of soldiers and horsemen but he said:

> "[We] proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava, that we might [afflict or] humble ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way."

And this is totally scriptural. I don't have time to go into it, but one of the appointed ways of humbling ourselves is by fasting. David said in Psalm 35:13, "I humbled my soul with fasting." Why does your soul need to be humbled? Because it is the arrogant, self-seeking ego in you. It is the thing that says, "I want, I think, I feel. I'm important, look at me." And that has to be humbled before God can really have His way in our life.

Whenever I tell this, I always think of a lawyer in Washington, D.C., some good many years ago now. He heard me teach on fasting. He is a Christian and he decided he would do it. He had a miserable day. Every time he walked past a restaurant or a delicatessen, his mouth watered and his stomach cramped and he wanted to go in. But he finished the day without breaking his fast. Then in the evening he gave his stomach a lecture and he said, "Now stomach, you have been very troublesome today and you made a lot of trouble for me. I'm going to punish you; I'm going to fast tomorrow as well."

That's how we have to deal with the self-assertive part of us. We have to bring it into subjection to the will and mind of God. I do believe that those Christians who do not in some scriptural way learn to practice fasting will not be able to administer the total victory of God. After all, Jesus could not do it. He started His ministry by forty days of fasting. You think you are further along than Jesus? He did not say to His disciples if you fast, He said when you fast. He used exactly the same language about fasting in his sermon in chapter 6 of Matthew as He did about prayer. If He expects us to pray, He expects us to fast.

Now you have to sort that out for yourselves and also you have to find out from the Holy Spirit what way and how to do it. But I would say, for Ruth and myself I think we could say, we would not dare to go ahead in the ministry that we are in if we did not practice regular fasting. Because we are challenging basically all the major forces of Satan in the world today, we are challenging them head-on and we need every help that we can get from God. And one way is by fasting.

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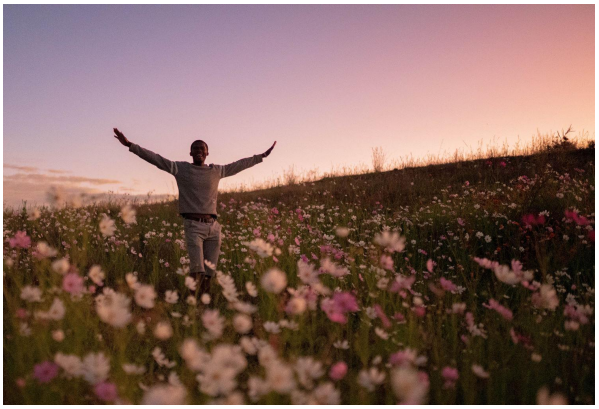

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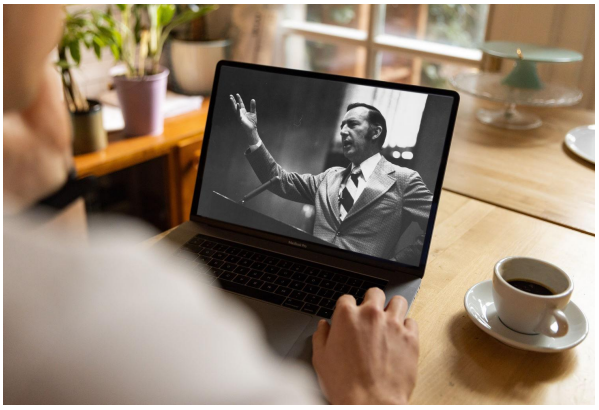

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