

Divine Imitation

Overview

A divine imitation. A divine imitation. When people are looking at very special antiquities, they're always concerned about the value, lest it should find out to be it's just an imitation.

So there's a negative connotation for imitation. But the Apostle Paul gives us in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 11, he gives us great cause to want to be an imitation. Imitators, in fact.

It's very clear from his writings that he had a very unique, powerful, passionate, deep relationship with Jesus. And he says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, the very first verse, be followers of me, even as I am of Christ. He could have said, I want you to be followers of Christ.

That would be a fair comment, a fair commission. But there would be some who would back away and say, there's no way I could live up to what Jesus has done. There's no way in which I can imitate him.

So Paul's saying, well, just think just down a bar. You have great respect for me. Could you find it in your heart to labor to be a follower of me? Because I am a follower of Christ.

It's a loaded comment. He's saying, you don't think you could live up to what Jesus would call you to do? Follow me. Paul's saying, I'm following him.

Would you care to follow me? Be a follower of me. In the New King James, it says, imitate me, even as I imitate Christ. And in the New International Version, follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.

This is the great hero of the New Testament. There's no question. We all love Jesus and we follow Jesus.

He's the King of kings, the Lord of lords. And the next person that certainly comes to my mind in terms of knowing the will of God, a great epistle writer, a great missionary, an incredible soul winner, a man who paid every cost that was levied at him, suffered shipwreck, suffered beatings, suffered all kinds of horrendous things, and probably his life ended with his head being cut off. What a man, what a wonderful testimony he leaves for us.

But when you're introduced to him, he's not this wonderful person. He's known as Saul, the man from Tarsus, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, proud and arrogantly so. Because the first time we meet him is in the book of Acts when Stephen, who's a mighty preacher and a soul winner, is being attacked by the current Jewish leaders.

And they've levied against him an accusation that he's causing trouble in the so-called church of Jerusalem, the Jewish church, the Jewish temple, that everything that this man Stephen represents in being a follower of this Jesus, this guy's a rebel and he deserves to die. Now, in order for that kind of an accusation to be carried out to the point of capital punishment, there had to be huge accusations. And it couldn't just be one person, but there had to be others also who would stand up and attest to it.

It's most interesting that Saul of Tarsus was nearby. He may have heard about this in advance or he may just have noticed a skirmish and the dust that was being kicked up as this would draw quite a crowd. Because in those days, they didn't have television, they didn't have radio and they didn't have YouTube.

What they usually were attracted to was bloodletting. And this man, if the stoning was carried out, was gonna be a horrendous mess. There was a significant crowd.

And in that crowd was Saul of Tarsus who had a reputation as one who was so committed to the Jewish religion that he hated this Jesus of Nazareth. He'd never met him, he'd never heard his preaching, but he knew that this Jesus had a huge following. And therefore, this Jesus is an enemy of the word of God that was given through Moses, of the tradition that was pandered down to us by Abraham.

And this Saul of Tarsus was known as a man who was given the license by the chief priests in Jerusalem. Round up these rabble-rousers, these rotten Christians so-called. Whoever these followers of Jesus of Nazareth, they are a problem to us and to our religious dignity and they're not gonna bring back the kingdom that we're looking for.

They're gonna get us all in trouble even with the Romans. The Romans did not want a lot of trouble in town. And followers of Jesus were calling no small stir.

So there's this Saul of Tarsus. And this man has such a reputation that those who were going to kill him, who were taking off their garments so they'd be free to heave their rocks and do their deed, Saul offered to hold their garments for them. He was present.

And without a doubt, he had quite a twinkle in his eye. For not only was he giving credence and support to this which was happening to Stephen, but in his mind, all these Christians need to be pounded into the ground and into the dust like this Stephen. Let him be the first of many.

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The following chapter in chapter eight, we read that then Paul, who at that time was still Saul, made havoc of the church, entering houses, dragging men and women who were reported to be followers of this Jesus. It sounds like what the Nazis did in France, what they did in Poland, then what they ended up doing in Germany, finding out that this person is a Jew, they would go to their house, drag them out, put them in the back of trucks, eventually on a train, and now to a death camp. They all had to die.

This is the very poison that was under the tongue of this Saul of Tarsus. If you hate the very thought and the memory of people like Hitler, this man, in a much lesser degree, could line up with the Hitlers and the Mussolinis and all the rest of them quite readily. This Saul of Tarsus was rotten to the core.

He got permission to chase them. Why would he have to chase them? Because Christians in Jerusalem were running for their lives. You don't read this readily, but it was actually happening.

Run before that Saul of Tarsus and his committee find you. And when he found out that they were going off out to other cities and other towns, he was given permission by the chief priest, go and get them, bring them back to Jerusalem, and we're gonna make a model out of them. We'll kill them all, drag them back, and we'll do them in.

Great was the Saul of Tarsus. He was the most feared man of the Jewish community. There might have been Romans that had power and authority and you'd fear them, but this Saul of Tarsus had the entire Jewish synagogue, the priesthood, the whole work, they were all before him, backing him.

Whatever he said was going to happen. He carried a very big stick. And then something quite miraculous happened.

It says in the ninth chapter of the book of Acts. Then Saul, still breathing out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogue of Damascus. Well, Damascus is in Syria, but you see, there were Jews who had gone to Syria and had made a life.

Christians had gone on to Syria to escape the wrath of Saul of Tarsus. So he gets a letter that says he can go to the synagogues and get the backing of the synagogues even in another country, Syria, so that if he found any who were of the way, that was what they called these Christian, they're of the way, the wrong way. If I can find people of the way, whether they're men or women, I'll bring them back bound to Jerusalem. But as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, so he's not far from the city, and suddenly a light shone around from heaven, and then he fell to the ground. And he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You find it strange that Jesus says you're persecuting me? No, we are members of his body. We are now the body of Christ, and Jesus is so connected to his people, to us, that when he attempts to confront Saul, he says, you think you're hurting the people that are hurting the Jewish gospel, the Jewish news, the Jewish way? You're kicking against me.

And Saul asks a question that was never so obvious to me as when I was studying this week, that Saul asks a legitimate question, Lord, who are you? And the reply is, I am Jesus, the man from Nazareth. That's the only thing that Saul knew about this Jesus, that he was a commoner, apparently the son of a carpenter, a man not with a great education. The only thing that Saul knew about this Jesus was he was from Nazareth.

And Jesus said, when he was asked, who are you? He said, I'm Jesus from Nazareth, and you are persecuting me. It's hard for you to kick against the goads. Do we know what goads are? We've heard of this word by times, it's seldom used, but they would say of someone who was an instigator, maybe of something that was clandestine, something cruel, something dark, they would say, and that group of people goaded him on.

You remember that? Goaded, G-O-A-D-E-D, goaded. Well, that's what you would do to an oxen if it was kind of tiring down and didn't wanna pull that cart that you were supposed to be delivering. You had this prod, and it had instruments of harm on the end of it, and you would goad that creature in its back leg, and you would cause it, its response would be to kick back, to push away that thing that seems to be biting at him.

And Jesus says, you're trying to hurt me, but you're finding it difficult, aren't you? Your conscience is being troubled. You're picking on me. I'm Jesus whom you're persecuting.

So Saul, trembling and astonished, says, Lord, what would you have me do? He immediately is cognizant of a fact. I've heard of this Jesus. I've heard what he's done.

I've heard that all these people are committed to this dead man that some have rumored he's risen from the grave. That's preposterous, impossible. Probably his own disciples stole his body so that they could make up this story about their hero.

Or maybe the Romans, in order to do damage to the followers of this Jesus, maybe they stole his body to discourage his disciples. So Saul had all these concepts in his mind, but suddenly he's confronted in a miraculous fashion, in a glow that would outshine the sun, and a sense of a glorious presence that he literally fell on the ground, probably nearing death. And he says, Lord, what shall I do? The Lord replies to him.

This is so unique. They're having a conversation. You don't have a conversation with a ghost or an apparition.

And it's so interesting. Those who were with him were not aware of what's going on. They would hear him talking.

He's talking to himself. They heard him talking. They didn't understand it.

And the Lord says, get up, go to the city, Damascus, that's where you're headed, keep on going, and you will be told further as to what you're supposed to do. So when Saul is being led by the hand, because he's blinded by the powerful light that has hit him, they had to take him by the hand, his servants, those who were with him were supposed to help him chain up these miserable Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem. These people now had to hold him by the hand and lead him into the city because the man was stone blind.

And where's he supposed to go when he gets there? He doesn't know. He simply says, all I know is I'm supposed to go to Damascus. Well, that's where you were going anyway.

This is fine. They had no idea. He didn't know where he was gonna go, but another vision was forthcoming.

The men who journeyed with him were speechless. Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one. Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened, he saw no one.

He opened up his eyelids, but there was nothing there. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And for three days, he was blind, and he did not eat, and he did not drink.

I submit to you that when he called Jesus Lord and said, what shall I do? He'd already been accused of doing wrong. You're kicking against me. You're attacking these people, and I'm upset with you.

And he asks, what shall I do? He is repenting immediately. He doesn't know what this Jesus wants him to do, but he's overwhelmed by what he has seen and what, well, what he hasn't seen, but what he's heard. He knows he's met the risen Savior.

His eyes were blinded to everything around him, but I promise you, he had some semblance of knowledge of Jesus right there, not just the voice, but I believe he saw something. I wanna suggest to you that as he was being led into the town, he had already experienced a spiritual transition that had already in his mind and his heart determined my work on behalf of the chief priest, my work on behalf of what I thought was the way to go. It's wrong, and I'm done with it.

There's Jesus is compelling me, and he's gonna give me new orders, and I'm gonna do it. That is the thought patterns of a man who's repented, a man so filled with bloodlust, anger, animosity, hatred. Suddenly, he's turned into a gentle lamb, arise and go into the city.

And so he went, and he fasted. He fasted. That's a spiritual exercise.

This is the workings in the spirit of man of redemption. God was working in his heart. Now, there was a certain disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and to him, the Lord gave a vision.

Ananias, I'm here, Lord, the Lord says, arise and go to a street that's called Straight. I checked this out. I'm not going to Damascus anytime soon. I can hardly get medical coverage to go to Buffalo and get a gas load for my car. I'm not heading for Damascus, but I promise you, if I ever do, I'm gonna go and check out a specific address because the street called Straight is still in the city of Damascus right now. Go there, and you'll wonder which house.

They didn't have numbers. There I was in, can't think of the name of the country now. I was on the west coast of Africa, and I was talking to somebody, and I said, and what is your address? And they looked at me sort of, what? They don't use words like address.

You would say, where do you live? You wouldn't say what you're at. You would simply say, because they don't have addresses. Where do you live? And they said, well, if you go down by the hamburger shop called Wimpy's, give me a hamburger today, and I'll pay you on Tuesday, Mr. Popeye.

Wimpy's, they don't have McDonald's, they have Wimpy's. So this man would tell you, when you get to Wimpy's, turn right. When you get past the big, big tree, you'll notice there's a dog chained up on the right-hand side.

Keep your distance, he's on a long chain. And the third house from the barking dog, that's where I live. I'm not putting you on.

This is how you find another person's house. When you get into the city, when you get up and get going, and go to a man's house and just ask around, the man's house on Straight Street, that man's name is Judas. That's the word to end.

I love this story. This is better than anything that you'll see coming from Hollywood. Arise and go to the house of Judas, because there's a man called Saul of Tarsus.

He's praying. Who's he praying to? He's praying to the one that he met on the Damascus Road, Jesus of Nazareth. I'm telling you, this is important.

He was already converted in here, okay? Say, yes, pastor. I think I counted two voices. He's praying, and in a vision, this man, Saul, has seen a man whose name is Ananias.

He's waiting for you. He sees you coming in, and he sees you putting your hand on him. Saul was putting his hands on people and seeing to their death, their imprisonment, and their suffering.

Here's a Christian that Saul would have likely, if he'd had the chance, would have put him in chains and had him stoned to death. When you get to the house of Judas, you're gonna find this Saul of Tarsus. He's blind, and when you minister to him, he's gonna get his sight, and he's gonna be filled with the Holy Ghost there and then.

And Ananias said, I've heard about this man. He's done a lot of harm to the saints in Jerusalem. Here, he has authority from the chief priest to bind all who call on your name, Lord.

And the Lord says, are we gonna have a debate much longer? The Lord says, go, for he's a chosen vessel of mine. That rascal, that rascal. When you sing amazing grace, Ananias, you'll have a picture in your mind.

Saul of Tarsus is gonna become Paul the apostle. This is amazing grace. This is glorious redemption.

Saul of Tarsus is gonna become a man of God, and in God's kingdom, a man of renown. He's a chosen vessel of mine. Watch this closely.

To bear my name before the Gentiles. That would have been news to Ananias. It wasn't enough that he was gonna have to deal with this Saul of Tarsus who could kill anybody he wants to, but the Lord's gonna use him to go in ministry to the dogs? The Gentiles? We need evangelists who are gonna reach out to our brethren, to the Jews.

And now God says, no, I've got somebody, and his first calling is the Gentiles. And Ananias went his way and entered into the house and laid his hands on him. I've told you that I was in the state house of Nairobi, Kenya.

April and I were invited to show up. It wasn't an invitation, it was a command. You will be in the state house at eight o'clock tomorrow morning.

You will have an appointment with the president. Now he'd been in several of my services and stayed evening after evening as we prayed for the sick. And he brought many, many people in the services.

So I don't think in my head, I wasn't thinking I'm in trouble, I'm thinking he likes me. And it was amazing when I got there that I had a missionary saying, no fast moves. There'll be men right behind you, they'll kill you like that.

He fears people. There's always people trying to kill him. There was a price on his head.

And so we had men who were on the ready right now. When I was preaching, it was a man, the baptistry was way up high and there was a sniper up there watching for anyone who might have an ugly idea about the president who was sitting right in front of me. Like the walls were lined with men in black suits and little pins on their lapel.

They were ready to put their lives in danger to salvage the president of Kenya. And I was told, David, be careful, be careful, be careful. You're talking to a mighty man.

He's one of the top men in the world. But as I sat there, I felt compelled in my spirit. I said, Mr. President, I'm gonna ask you very, very humbly. There's something I feel impressed to say to you. He said, what's that? I said, I think the Lord would have me put my hands on you. And Roy Upton's knee was beside mine and his knee is hitting my knee saying, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

And the president stood up from behind his desk, came around and stood in front of me and said, as he put his head down, he said, please do so. I laid my hands upon him and he shook like a leaf in a violent wind. Holy Spirit came upon him.

And Ananias, not without fear, puts his hands upon now a converted man. He was there to be filled with the Holy Ghost because he was a chosen vessel. And Ananias ministers to him.

And it says immediately, those shingles, those scales that were upon his eyes suddenly were gone. He received his sight and he arose. Remember what I preached? Did you get baptized last Sunday? I preached last Sunday that baptism is not how you get saved.

We do not embrace a fallacy that's known as baptismal regeneration. Paul's already well on his way to becoming a powerful man of God. And now that the spirit of God has come upon him by laying on of hands, he's experienced a miracle of his eyes being opened.

And it says he went ahead because now he had learned from them, maybe from Ananias, you need to be baptized. It says he received his sight at once and he arose and was baptized. The baptism followed his conversion.

The baptism followed the anointing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I rest my case. So when he received some food after three days, they probably brought him 10 cheeseburgs from McDonald's and supersized his fries.

Then Saul spent some days with the disciples of Damascus. I want to go on with the time. Somebody said to me, please stop saying I'm out of time, I'm out of time.

We're here for the day. How many are here for the day? One, two, we're gonna order cheeseburgs for those who are gonna stay. Oh no.

Followers of me, imitators, imitators of how I follow Christ. So this man, this man is touched by the hands of Ananias. Miracles take place in his life.

So for the next couple of minutes, I just want to quickly mention to you about his ministry, his experience. He summed up in Philippians 121. To live is Christ.

So many Christians have Jesus as an urn in the refrigerator with ice water, that when they get thirsty, they take a little drink. They're like my mother would be some years ago going to Shryer's meat market. She'd walk in and Mr. Shryer knew her, knew my dad very well.

And he would call my mother by her first name, hello Marian. And my mom would say, Mr. Shryer, I've come for some Hamburg today. And he would say something like, I've got it on today for \$2 and 25 cents a pound. Do you remember when food was that cheap? And my mother would have said, I don't need a full pound. Maybe a half a pound will do me. The Lord Jesus in this man's life.

Jesus was not a reference. He was not a medicine cabinet. He was not just a lawyer that he could check with about things.

He was not just a mentor. He said for me to live from the moment I awake in the morning from the first breath I'm aware, from the moment I'm awake in the morning, this day is Jesus. Jesus was not a coat that he put on every morning.

Jesus was the sum total of his whole life. This is the man who wanted to kill every Christian alive. And suddenly he's not just a Christian.

He's a towering infernal, sold out and radical for Jesus. For me to live is Christ. And of course he went on to say, and what of dying? Oh, and that's the cream on the cake.

Because while I'm here, I'm away from him. But when I shed this old tired body, I'll be with him. He was just in his mid thirties when he was on the road to Damascus.

That's not recorded in scripture, but people smarter than me are able to figure things like that and I don't worry about checking out their thoughts. His message, I feel it's Philippians 2.5. This is the sum total of his message. Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus.

That means everything else in your mind, you set aside. Everything else comes secondary, third dairy, or even as the last thing on your list. The only thing that matters is that you have the mind of Christ.

He says to us, be a follower of me as I am of Christ. I have a relationship with Jesus that I don't even have to pause for a moment and think things through. The mind of Christ flows through me.

Christianity is not like a play where you stutter your lines and when the moment comes when you have to activate your Christianity, it's not something you pause. And remember, oh, it's not like an essay or it's not like a test in the testing. This is a trick question.

What is the answer? Out of your innermost being flows rivers of living water because for you just to live is Christ. How are you doing, Christian? David, you're talking down to us this morning. No, I'm dealing with this already in my week.

How are you doing, David? None of your business. I long to have the mind of Christ. I'm not gonna wear a silly little bracelet.

What would Jesus do? I don't need a reminder. What would Jesus do? What was his concept of his service to the Lord? Romans 1.14. He wrote the book of Romans. Romans, Italians.

He wrote this to a church in Rome that he had never met. I find that incredible. He writes to his brothers and says, how often I've planned to come to you, but somehow the Lord has forbid it and kept me back.

I long to come and hear from you. I wanna feed into you, but I believe that you have some things to feed into me. I wanna be there with you.

And how do I feel about you? You people are not Jews. The most of you are Gentiles. And the churches in rock, do you know that the church fought over that the whole thing about Jewishness for something like 13 or 14 years? These Gentiles have gotta be circumcised.

And they were serious. They've gotta become sons of Abraham because Abraham's family is the chosen people. They're not chosen people until they join us properly.

They wanted to send them to school. They wanted to drive these Gentiles crazy. And Paul writes to the people of Rome, to the Gentiles, and he says, to you, I'm in debt.

I'm in debt to you. I am a debtor. And why would Paul call himself a debtor? Why would he feel he's in such terrible debt? Because he's already told us in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse nine, he says, I am the least of the apostles, the least.

I'm unworthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church to begin with. He's saying, I'm spending every day of my life trying to make up for the stupidity that I was locked in my old Old Testament religious ways. It took in a Damascus Road blast.

Meeting Jesus one-on-one to bring me to this. And you people, you Gentiles, I consider you to be the best of the best. And whatever these crazy Jewish Christians are saying to you, you turn a deaf ear to that because they're wrong.

The just shall live by faith, not by the sharpness of the razor blade. Why do I get oh so heated up over this kind of stuff? Because you see, I was raised in a Pentecostal church. That in many, many, many, many, many, far too many ways was as pharisaical as they were anything else.

We had wonderful services, people were getting saved. But I wasn't allowed to go and see Mickey Mouse in the movie house. I overcame that.

I got past that. But as a little boy, I asked my mother, all my friends were going to see Mickey on Saturday. David, can you come with us? And I went to my mom and I said, can I go and see Mickey? And my mother said, no, if you go to see Mickey Mouse, the pastor says you're gonna go to hell.

What kind of religion was that? And when I was being forced in grade eight to dance with the girls, I was so filled with the concept that dancing was of the devil and the only people who dance are the people who are destined for hell. If you dance, David, you're going to hell. And there my school teacher, the gym teacher, took her whole class down to the gymnasium and wonder of wonders, I'd never seen this before.

The gym, you see, was divided in half. Big doors. The girls were always on the other side.

But on that day, the doors were folded back. There's girls in here, what are they doing in our gym? And there was that school teacher. Me thinks when I think back, she walked like a hymn, she talked like a hymn.

I'm not talking about a hymn book. This person was ready for combat. She stood there with her hands on her hips like this.

Boys, line up here, drill sergeant. We all lined up here. Girls, you line up over here.

And as she went down the line, tapping on our shoulder, you with her, you with her. I was fading. If I go through with this, I'm going to hell.

Sure as God made little green apple. David, you didn't believe that. That's what they taught me.

And in front of a whole, how many classes were in that room? Probably three or four classes altogether. When they started the record playing, all they wanted me to do is do-si-do with your partner. Spin her around, kick her in the backside and say, you're done.

I don't know, they wanted me to do this dancing stuff. And I stood there like a pillar of salt. The record player stopped.

And she's like this, who do you think you are? I could feel the tears running down my legs. I was scared spitless. And the man teacher walked over.

Are you going to dance? No, sir. He put his thumb into my, up in here somewhere. And he started pushing down.

And as he's pushing down, the pain is excruciating. And I'm going down to the floor. And now my cheek is on the linoleum floor.

He says, you'll dance. And I said, no. He picked me up by the scruff, marched out and the whole outfit figured, he's going to get the strap.

That strap was about, I'd never seen it, but I knew it was about four feet wide. And it had nails stuck in it, it would rip you to shreds. I'll never forget, he marched me into the office and the principal came out and the principal said, well, what do we have here? He's belligerent.

He's a rebel. He won't dance. The principal looks at me and says, is that right, David? Tears are running down my cheeks. He said, yes, sir. He's a smarter guy than the football player. He says, you go, I'll take care of this. And I thought, here comes the strap. This was a gentle man. He said, David, sit on a chair. He's figuring something out. Why is this kid ready to die for a non-do-si-do? He said, David, what's your problem? And I mumbled out these words with tears. I don't want to go to hell, sir.

He said, what? I don't want to go to hell. And then he probed deeper. Where do you get this? My pastor says.

He says, you can't be serious. What religion is this? I said, I don't know, sir. He said, what else do they believe in? I said, we don't. But you know, what we don't believe in is now seen as what we do. But what does your church believe in? He said, we don't dance. And we don't chew tobacco.

And we don't smoke smokes. And we don't play pool. And we're not allowed to love Mickey Mouse. You could just see his eyes rolling up in his head. He said, David, I'm so sorry. He felt sorry for me. He really did. This poor kid's being raised. How? But there's ways to teach people about how walking with Jesus, instead of giving them a great big list of these are the things you can't do, like that doesn't work.

You got to add to the list every day, don't you? All kinds of junk is coming out now. The list gets longer and longer and longer. Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who was here to please the Father.

And whatever please the, if it be your will, let this cup pass. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. Let that mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who counted his equality with a father to be something that he could set aside so that he could make a view with that which you could never be.

His concept was that of debtor. And he went on to say, I'm ready. Ready for what? For whatever comes, I'm ready. I'm ready to live, I'm ready to die. And he said, dear God, I want to live up to this one. He said, and I want you to know, I am not ashamed. That's a hard one to get past, you know. I think at times we are ashamed. It's like, pastor, no, I am not ashamed.

How often do we speak to someone about Jesus and we fail to do so out of fear of rejection? You're one of those crazy church people, aren't you? Don't be afraid. Because fear is a part of shame. His Christology, I've got to finish.

This is the summation of his Christology. This is what we believe about Jesus. For in him, the apostle says in Colossians, for in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. What's that word bodily mean? We think of flesh and blood. No, he means in totality. In him dwells all the fullness of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit in completeness.

And you are now complete. You are complete. Here's this word, you are complete in him.

Him who is the head of all principality and power. I'm gonna finish now, I promise. I have to read this.

I love this. The apostle says in 2 Timothy, I am already being poured out as a drink offering. Do you know what a drink offering was? If you're dying of thirst and someone gives you a cup of water, you pour it out on the dry ground as an offering of love to him.

That was the drink offering. I'm already being poured out like a drink off. When the water hits the ground, can you scoop it up again? It's worse than breaking a pillow of feathers and hoping to catch it in the wind and bring it all back.

You pour water on dry ground, it's gone. And Paul says, my whole life is starting to feel like a drink offering. I'm already poured out.

And the time of my departure is at hand. Dear David Forrest, are you sure you're ready to go? Paul was ready. If you knew you had 48 hours to live, how would you spend those 48 hours? Maybe the first two hours repenting.

I'm not accusing anybody of anything. The thumb points this way first. Paul said, I'm ready to go, are you? I fought a good fight. I finished my race. I've kept the faith. And finally, there's laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day.

And not to me only, but also to all who have loved his appearing. There's humility. When I get to heaven, he's gonna put a crown on my head. Oh, we understand that, Paul. Billy Graham, of course, he's gonna have a crown. They're gonna have to give him an extra platform to hold.

It's gonna be huge. Paul said, I'm gonna receive a crown of righteousness, but so are you. If you remain firm, if you left this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, if you count your life, everything about your life is Christ, and nothing else matters. You can handle rejection. You can handle mocking. There is, I've never seen it.

If I ever get back to England, ha ha. If I ever get back to London, I wanna see it. I wanna see with my own eyes. There is carved in a majestic building, and I'm sorry, I don't know the name of that building. It might be a courthouse. It might be a library. I don't know what it is. But it's a massive, massive architectural masterpiece. And up over the whole major facade at the top, carved out of the stone that's up there, carved into that rock, massive.

They say it's huge. Is the caricature the artistic portrait of an oxen? And to the one side of the oxen is a yoke. And on the other side of the oxen is an altar. And the words beneath the oxen, ready for either. I've preached it. May God give me whatever it takes, Nicholas, to live it. And God help me never to fail, to live up to Christ in me, the hope of glory. For me to live is Christ. For me to live is not to be the pastor of this church. I've dealt with this. What is your identity, David? I said, oh, I refuse the word reverend. I've told people, don't use that on me.

That frightens me. There's nothing reverend about me. I need bath more often than I do. Don't call me reverend. But my identification is not pastor. My identification is not minister. My personal identification is, who are you, David? Praise God, praise God. I'm a child of the king. His royal blood now flows through my veins. That's my identity. What's your identity? I'm a rich man. I'm a machinist. I'm a successful farmer. I'm this, I'm that. Congratulations, Bunky.

It'll all go into the same coffin with you. And in no time, you'll be forgotten. But this identification is never lost. Christ in you, the hope of glory. The most hated man in Christendom at the time became the strongest fire brand that the church could know at the time. And probably, he was a greater than Billy Graham.

Billy Graham studied at the feet of Paul the Apostle by reading Paul's theology, hallelujah. I'm ready to go another hour. We better close this down. Heavenly Father, I don't feel worthy to have even spoken these words this morning. Your word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword. Help us to abide in the word. Help us to listen to the Apostle Paul and help us not to shrink back from. Be imitators of me, even as I am an imitator of Christ. I can all things but dung.

Oh, that I might know him. The powers of resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings. I'll never be worthy, Lord. And it's all right for me to say I am not worthy to be called a pastor, any of these things. Paul said, I'm not worthy to be called an apostle. I'm the least of the apostles. I don't deserve this honor because the record is clear. I was a rotten sinner. ♪ Amazing grace, how sweet the sound ♪ ♪ That saved a wretch like me ♪ ♪ I once was lost, but now I was blind ♪ ♪ But now I see.

♪ David's last words are words from the book. If I got a little too close to your cuticle and your fingernails this morning, remember this. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The condemnation was dealt with on the cross. You are guilty now of nothing. Nothing. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. Guilty of nothing, brother. Guilty of nothing.

It goes on though. There's now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus who walk not. Oh, oh, oh, it's louder. There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who. So this grace is not a license to go on with the old ways. We know that. Are you eternally secure? Watch when I go through the gates. I guess you'll know someday. God bless you all.

God bless you all.