

The Philistines

Part 1

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[00:00:00] I wonder if we could turn to the Word of God as we sang a rather long hymn. Would you turn please to the second book of Samuel and chapter 23, verse 8.

These be the names of the mighty men whom David had.

The Taqmanite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains.

The same was Adino, the Esnite. He lift up his spear against 800, whom he slew at one time.

And after him was Eliezer, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite. One of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away. He arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, [00:01:11] and his hand clave unto the sword. And the Lord wrought a great victory that day.

And the people returned after him, only to spoil. And after him was Shammah, the son of Agi, the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop. Where was a piece of ground full of lentils? And the people fled from the Philistines.

But he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines.

And the Lord wrought a great victory. And the three of the 30 chief went down and came to David [00:02:04] in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam. And the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David longed and said, Oh, that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate. And the three mighty men break through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless, he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this.

[00:03:01] Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men. And I want to read one or two passages from the second epistle to Timothy. Chapter one will commence at verse three.

I thank God whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscious, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy

tears, that I may be filled with joy. When I call to remembrance the unfain faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Louis, and thy mother Eunice, [00:04:03] and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. Chapter two.

Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore [00:05:05] endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give the understanding in all things.

The fourth chapter. Verse three. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts they shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, [00:06:04] and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things. Endure afflictions. Do the work of an evangelist.

Make full proof of thy ministry, for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

[00:07:04] I think that will do.

I want to begin with, dear brethren, to speak about this enemy of the children of Israel in the Old Testament, which I no doubt you have noticed as given quite a large portion in the word of God. I mean the Philistines. I believe I would be right in saying that there is not another enemy of the children of Israel that is spoken of so much as the Philistines.

The reason why I want to speak about the Philistines, beloved brethren, is because I believe they appear on the word of God in the Old Testament [00:08:06] as a very clear type and warning of the enemy that seems very particularly to come against the people of God in the last days.

And this is the reason that I have read from Paul's second epistle to the Timothy. I believe we can find Philistines in 2 Timothy.

You may remember that they are not of the seven nations that were in the land whom God said he would not dispossess. They were in many ways geographically similar to the people of God.

[00:09:02] I have learned from others, I believe it to be true, that like the children of Israel, they came out of Egypt. And they settled in the land of Canaan. In this they are similar. They occupy therefore

divine territory.

But in this and further, their similarity with the people of God finishes.

They knew not of the passage of the Red Sea.

They knew not of the power of the redemption. They knew nothing of the discipline of the wilderness. They knew nothing of the brazen serpent. They knew nothing of the passage of Jordan. [00:10:03] And yet, they appear in the promised land.

I didn't read it, but in the third chapter of 2 Timothy, the chapter starts off with a rather unpleasant catalogue of people who, sad to say, we see all around us.

He finishes the list by saying this of them, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Philistines.

Philistines. Now brethren, I am not suggesting that there are Philistines amongst the saints of God, far be the thought. [00:11:01] But what I am suggesting, beloved brethren, is, I say this feelingly, there's a great danger in the last days. These are the last days. The coming of the Lord is very near. But there is a great danger for me to be characterised by Philistine character.

You know, even David was not proof against this.

And if David wasn't, typically, I think he stands in this incident of which I would refer you as a warning to you and I. You remember that when he was made king, he had right thoughts of the ark of God. Oh, how vital it is to have right thoughts of that of which the ark of God speaks. David had true and real cherished affections for the ark of God.

[00:12:03] And he sought with the people to bring it up into its right place, where it had never been during the reign of Saul. But you remember, he made an awful mistake. He put it upon a cart. Where did he get that idea from? Philistines. Philistines. You remember when they sent back the ark of God from the house of Dagon, they put it on a cart. You'll never find a Philistine carrying the ark of God. In one sense, he can't. But in another sense, he'll never have a desire to bear the weight of the ark of God. In one sense, he can't. But in another sense, he'll never have a desire to bear the weight of that precious testimony. [00:13:01] But sad to say, David mimicked.

It may not have happened in his life, but I no doubt he knew of the incident. It may have happened before he was born, I don't know. But I no doubt he knew of the incident. And I say again, the putting of the ark of God on a new cart was a Philistine idea. And how did it end? God came in, in a breach. David was afraid. Everything was a failure. If you read the record, though, in Chronicles, this incident, you know, we have twice in the Word of God. But if you read of the incidents in Chronicles, which we believe presents mainly moral issues for our understanding, there are two chapters in between the first time he brought up the ark, or tried to, and the second time. And in those two chapters, twice, in the power of that power which moved in the mulberry [00:14:06] trees, he defeated the Philistines, twice.

And then, he says to the children of Israel, we didn't do it at the first, after the due order. The due

order. And beloved brethren, there is a due order in regard to the house of God. And David, sad to say, in this incident, had turned away from the due order, and had recourse to a Philistine idea. It's a warning. But he said, none ought to carry the ark but the Levites. And this is the way that he set it up the second time. He put those men that were dedicated and consecrated for the job at the head, and they carried the ark. And the Spirit of God records that when the Levites lift up the ark, it says, God help [00:15:01] them. You see that when we abide by the divine order, there is divine support. There was no support when David put that ark upon a cart. Rather, the reverse. God came in. His displeasure was great against it.

But when the Levites lifted up the ark, God helped them. And you see, the first time, the second time, the third time, the fourth time, the fifth time, and you read the end of that chapter, there was great joy. There was more than great joy. There was praise. And you remember, it's recorded of David that he dealt to every man a piece of meat, a piece of bread, a flagon of wine, food for the people of God. I only say this, though, to illustrate what I have in mind, dear brethren, and it is only by way of encouraging our souls in these last difficult days, and they are difficult [00:16:04] days, it is only to encourage our souls and yet to warn our souls that the insidious way that the Philistine element would come in to mar the service of God and our enjoyment of our inheritance in these last days.

It's interesting to see where the Philistines first come to light. The remarkable thing is, perhaps you've noticed it is, that as soon as God in sovereign grace picks up a man and calls him out of Babylon into a path of pilgrimage, a Philistine appears. Although remarkably enough, he's not called a Philistine there, I refer to a Bimelech. Do not you see, beloved brethren, that what one is trying to put over, that whenever God calls something out for his pleasure, the devil is there with his imitation of it.

[00:17:05] Why should the devil seek to imitate what is of God? It is on order that the people of God might be ensnared. A Bimelech didn't cause Abraham very much trouble, but as soon as we have recorded in scripture of Isaac, typical of the man who has gone into death and has come out of death in resurrection, the Philistine then is called a Philistine, and he is called a Bimelech. The man who has gone into death and has come out of death in resurrection, the Philistine then is called a Philistine, and he is manifested in his true character. And what is it said of them? They filled up the wells that Abraham had dug.

They filled them with earth. Isn't scripture crystal clear? [00:18:04] The Old Testament, thank God for it, a wonderful rehearsal for you and I of the principles of operation that God in his mercy works and in his faithfulness.

Here were men who filled in the energetic work of Abraham when he dug those wells in order that he might have refreshment. Isaac lost them because of the Philistine. They filled them in. I'm quite sure, beloved brethren, today that the activity in which the enemy is most engaged upon in our meetings is to annul the refreshing supply and power of the Holy Spirit of God.

[00:19:08] And that, I believe, is the character of Philistines.

They hinder the free, refreshing streams of eternal life, so to speak, in the power of the Holy Spirit. They bring deadness in. They bring coldness in. Why? Because they don't know anything of the truth of the death of Christ. You remember another thing that characterizes a Philistine is that they couldn't answer Samson's riddle. You remember he put forth a riddle. Out of the strong cometh forth meat. They couldn't answer it. [00:20:05] Why? Because they knew nothing of the victory of God over death.

And yet they occupied divine territory. I say again, people in professing Christendom who are not real.

Now, again, I say, beloved brethren, this is only by way of encouragement. I would never suggest that there is such a person amongst us. But let us genuinely, before God, examine ourselves in the light of such a thing. Am I real? Am I true? Do I occupy the ground upon which I stand because of a true conviction that it's right in the sight of God? If it is not so, I'm under the influence of a Philistine.

[00:21:07] You remember that in the sixth chapter of John, the Son of God spoke hard sayings.

They said, these are hard sayings, who can hear them? Can this man give us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink? And the scripture records that from that time forth, many of his disciples walked no more with him. And the scripture records that from that time forth, many of his disciples walked no more with him. Have you ever wondered why the Lord spoke those words, precious words to you and I, hard words to the flesh? He knew what the result of his ministry would be, you know, [00:22:02] to us in love and yet in truth, grace and truth, that he spoke those words. Unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life. Unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. He knew what the effect of his words would be, many of them went away. Sad it is, brethren, sad for them that they went, but I make bold to say the saddest heart there was that of the Savior. Oh, the pitifulness of the cry as he turned to those that were left, will ye also go away? Yet the remarkable thing is that he still said those words. The result that he knew his ministry would have did not deter him from saying them. They went. [00:23:02] Christ must have reality. The truth of God must be held in the soul in faith and in true conviction that this is the truth of God. They went away. I really must get to the portion that I read. We have read of three men. I don't want to speak about the first one, but we have read of three men in David's category of mighty men who overcame the Philistines.

Note that they worked individually in the large. If you look at the book of Judges as typical, dispensationally, you'll find that the Philistines are the last enemy, and the man who put them to flight was an individual. He didn't move with an [00:24:02] army. He moved in the power of his own integrity and Naziriteship to God. I refer to Samson.

He was the last judge. The Philistines appear last in the book of Judges.

They are the enemy about us, beloved brethren, in the last day, imitators, people who are in professing Christendom, but aren't real. And brethren, we are very, very susceptible to such.

Can I honestly say again, and I press this point for I fear it is vital, I say this feelingly to young brethren, am I in the meetings because of a true conviction? [00:25:02] Do I walk a separate path here because I feel this path is according to the truth of God, and I have a real exercise in heart and soul that this is the truth of God, and consequently this is the path that I must walk? There will be no power unless what I do, the position I occupy in the meetings, in the testimony, I say it feelingly, it will have little weight unless the spring of my motive is a true conviction in the conscience that this is the place that God would have me. I say it feelingly, brethren. Am I true to God in the position that I am standing? Do I view the legacy of the truth of God which we have here in our hands, that men during the last decade labored for in order that [00:26:03] we should come into the blessedness of it? Do I hold this in my soul and in my conscience with a true sense that this is the truth of God and demands my obedience to it?

There is an enemy about, philistine in character, that would put me in a position where it appears as though I'm walking in this way, but it's not in power in the soul.

Let us be real, brethren. Let us not compromise with the world. Let us not compromise with the scene around us. Let us be true in heart. Let us seek each one individually to examine ourselves in the light of this vital truth, the position that I take up in the testimony. Is it out of love for Christ? It must [00:27:05] be at the core, but alongside it, is there a genuine conviction in my soul that I stand here because this is the place that God would have me. You know, there may be many young people in this meeting like myself who have come under the priceless privilege of having had godly parents who have brought me up in the meetings. I've sat under the privilege of gathering together in the house of God with the saints of God in the blessedness of their happy presence. What a priceless privilege, but do I value that position? Do I hold it in my heart with a true conviction before God that this is not just the place I've been brought up in, but the place where God would have me in accordance with the truth of his precious word. This is vital. [00:28:09] These three men, you know, they love David. They had followed a rejected king. I should not perhaps call him a king at this moment, although he had been anointed. But there was a usurper upon the throne, although allowed to be there by God, I mean Saul. I see the time is going very quickly.

Saul, you know, is typical of the man of flesh. He brought the children of Israel into bondage. He never was a match for the Philistines.

And there were hard times in Israel, discontent, distress. Men were in debt, but blessed be God they found a relief for it in David. And they went to him. He became a captain [00:29:05] over them. They loved him and they were faithful to him.

And they held the ground that David held because it was divine territory. And in the day when David was set up on high as the king of Israel, if you look at the first verse of this chapter, 23rd of Samuel, David, the son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, put in the place of exaltation. And here is the list of the men that were faithful to him. Oh, it's grand to read it. If you read through this chapter, the things, the exploits that men did and the Lord brought a great victory. But why did they do it? Because they loved David and they were faithful to him. And they had an estimation, a high estimation of the value of divine territory. [00:30:05] We could go down them quickly. How pointed the words are of Eliezer.

They defied the Philistines. The enemy was coming in like a flood. Oh, true it is. He comes in like a flood. The men of Israel, they'd all gone away.

May it be never said of me that I've gone away. Never be it said of me, never allowed to be said of me, beloved brethren, that I've gone away and they'd left somebody else to stand alone to face the enemy. The men of Israel had gone away. But thank God for a man who valued divine territory. He stood in it.

[00:31:01] It says he defied the Philistines. He was greatly outnumbered and it appears as though he was alone. How such an act is valued by David when he was made king. The list of mighty men, he's one who it appears is amongst the ones at the top. A man who stood alone in divine territory when everybody else had run away or gone away. It may be the reason was legitimate here, I know not. But anyway, the enemy came in when everybody else was not aware and had gone. But there was one man there who said, I'm going to stand. And he stood.

He stood there till he was weary. Can't you understand, Paul, when he writes to Timothy, says to him, [00:32:06] endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. My dear young Christian, if you're going to stand for God in the testimony, you're going to have to be prepared to endure hardness. To be faithful to Christ in the present day is going to cost you something. I cannot bring before you anything in the way of material gain or anything even in the way of reward in this present life for standing faithfully to Christ, apart from his approval. The reward is in a coming day, not here. This is not our resting place. This, beloved brethren, is the place of trial, testing, affliction, and fighting, not rest.

Not rest. [00:33:03] I believe one of the old writers said that Christianity is not a bed of roses. It's a battlefield. Why? Because there is always an enemy about who is seeking to rid you and me of the enjoyment of divine things. And the Philistines came in. They got a long way into the territory, you know. They encroached a long way into that blessed land under the reign of Saul. Oh, what a warning to you and I. They almost engulfed the land in the reign of Saul. The ark of God, it was lost sight of altogether. A man who rejected the word of God on the throne, and a man whom God rejected on the throne. And the people of God came into bondage under his sway, and the Philistines came in. There was little for God in the land of Israel at this time. Poverty. [00:34:03] But there was a band that were more than matched for the enemy, and they had one in their midst whom they loved, and whom they were faithful to, who knew what it was to slay the mightiest of them single-handed. He, as a youth, could say of the greatest of the Philistines, I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts whom thou hast defied. And with no sword in his hand, but in faithfulness to God, the God of Israel, he slew Goliath of Geth.

God give us grace to be able to do that. Goliath of Geth. God give us grace to be able to stand against the encroaches of Philistine things that would rob us of the enjoyment of what God has for us. He was weary, but God helped him. He fought so long that he couldn't let go of the sword. [00:35:03] Brethren, don't let go of the sword. Hold fast to the word of God. What's it say?

The Lord wrought a great victory. Oh, how encouraging.

Remember this, dear Saint of God, dear young one. If you stand fast for a divine principle, God will stand with you. The men of Israel may have gone away, but here was a man who sought to hold fast something that was precious and valuable, and God was with him. And the Lord wrought a great victory, and the men of Israel came back only to spoil. Oh, you see, they all got the gain of this man's victory. All the brethren got the gain of this man's faithfulness. How blessed to be such in one to die amongst the people of God. Shall we go on to another one? The Philistines went out in a troop, foraging, going deep into the promised land, [00:36:06] seeking wayward ones, so to speak, seeking what they could destroy, seeking to take away food amongst the people of God. You know, these things are about us today, beloved brethren. I'm not reversing these things. It's just a history story. There are elements about today. The work of the enemy that would destroy food amongst the people of God and bring you and I into poverty in the meetings. Oh, brethren, as you move around the meetings, how often you find me, brethren, sad. Smallness of numbers, weakness in the testimony.

No young people coming on. Brethren, it's sad. Why is it?

[00:37:02] Why are we in weakness? Why are we in smallness of numbers? Why is there little power in the testimony? Brethren, God give us grace to search our hearts. Are we giving way? Are we moving away from a position that we have been placed in, privileged to hold? Are we giving way? These men didn't. They stood. What's the value of a patch of lentils? Not much, you and I may think. But this man

thought it was very valuable, a bit of food for an impoverished Israel of God. He put his foot in it. He said to the Philistines, as it were, you may come this far, but you'll not get by me. And he stood. And he stood. And beloved brethren, the hardest thing today is to stand.

[00:38:01] Having done all the apostle says in the sixth of Ephesians, go at the Pope completely with that heavy armor. It's heavy armor in Ephesians. You've got to have it all on. And what is the result when you've got all the armor on? You'll only stand. It's a great thing to stand in the testimony, in the truth of God.

The Lord wrought a great victory.

They couldn't get past Sharma. And then we read of three. And this is most choice. Here were three men. They not only valued divine territory. They not only saw the need of maintenance of food amongst the people of God. But here were three men that responded to the longing heart of David.

Men that responded to the Lord's beloved. [00:39:01] Here is a picture of three devoted hearts to Christ. And beloved brethren, I fear. I shouldn't say I fear, but I feel. This is the greatest of all. Some, you know, have sought to find out who the three mightiest were. I believe it can be found. And I believe, although I would not say that this is absolutely certain. The three mightiest men may have been these three men. They were near enough to David to hear the breathings of his longing soul. Oh, that one would give me a drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem. It is by the gate. A rejected man, a hunted man, a hated man.

Four hundred men round about him who loved him. [00:40:01] And they did love him. Thou art worth ten thousand of us, they said. This was their estimation of David, sweet psalmist of Israel. And they would have willingly laid down their lives for him. And they proved it. It says the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. Think of it, brethren. The enemy had come in so far that they were in the house of bread. They were in the house of bread, right up to Bethlehem, how sad.

They occupied that position in the midst of which was this thing that David desired.

Scripture is very curt, very precise.

It says they break through. They drew the water and they brought it to David. [00:41:05] Oh, beloved brethren, oh, to have the reality of affection for Christ that will break through anything that intervenes in order that I might refresh his blessed heart. This is the kernel, this is the core of Christianity. C. H. Macintosh said, brethren, the core of Christianity is love for Christ. Love for Christ. And love for Christ is proved by faithfulness to him, devotion to his cause, and holding fast to the things that are precious to him. They brought him a drink. He wouldn't drink thereof. Oh, how David shines at this incident. These men had put their lives in jeopardy for him. This was their estimation of David in their sight. [00:42:03] He only requested a drink of water. These men were prepared to put their lives in danger to bring David a drink of water. Oh, beloved brethren, can I honestly say that I would lay aside everything and go through thick and thin to bring something of refreshment to the heart of Christ? You remember there was a woman in the New Testament. She had an alabaster box of ointment. She brought it to him. She poured it upon him. Oh, a heart of appreciation for the preciousness of Christ.

But there's a Philistine there. For he was not this waste sold for 300 pence and given to the poor.

[00:43:06] There's a Philistine there. Brethren, there is always something about that will hinder your heart and mine responding to the heart of Christ. Let us see to it that we are equipped as men that will fight through everything in order that we might hold fast to that which is precious to the heart of Christ. When David was upon the throne, when he was exalted on high, these men had their reward.

And so Paul, in seeking to encourage this young man, of whom he could speak of having unflinching faith, a faith that was genuine. This is vital. A genuine living link with Christ.

[00:44:05] Not only having the appearance of it, but a genuine living link inside the heart and the conscience with Christ, unflinching faith. A man of tears. What was it that made Timothy weep? Departure. And the beloved apostle took account of this young man's tears. And he saw in those tears a genuine concern and care for the people of God.

Paul says, that's the man who I can use, who God can use, to encourage and establish the saints of God. A man who tearfully before God took account of the saints of God in affliction and in [00:45:03] trouble and in trial, and in genuine feeling for them, could care for them.

Genuine faith to Christ. Genuine affection for the saints of God. How valuable is such a one amongst us today. May we be found amongst our brethren. May we be amongst those such as Timothy, whom the spring of motives of his love to Christ, having a genuine faith in him. A faith that will go out to him in all exigencies and trials. And yet alongside with it a genuine love and care for the saints of God. What does Paul say of this young man? He says, be strong.

Stir yourself up. You've got something within you that you can use. Brethren, we've all got something that we can use for the encouragement of the saints of God. [00:46:01] Let us stir it up.

Let us push it in motion. That's what stirring does. It puts things in motion. Am I exercising that which I've got, an ability given of God, for the benefit of the saints of God? Paul says, Timothy, stir it up. Get on with it. Why? God has not given us the spirit of cowardice. Let us never be afraid of standing for the truth of God, beloved brethren. God has given us the spirit of power. Power. Power in a broken day. Yes. That which perhaps is lacking in the meeting. God has given us a spirit of power and of love and of wise discretion.

Oh yes, beloved brethren, we've got wonderful resources. If only we will exercise a living faith and a genuine care and love for the saints of God. We've got that available to us, which will enable us to stand against the enemy. [00:47:03] But it involves affliction. It involves hardship. Am I prepared for it? Paul says to Timothy right at the beginning, have your part in the afflictions of the gospel. And of me, be not ashamed, he says, of the testimony of our Lord.

Neither of me is prisoner. You know, brethren, sometimes we're very bold. We're very forthright in standing up for the Lord. But we lag behind. And it talks about the shame of Paul. Paul puts the two together, you know. Not only does he say, be not ashamed of the testimony. But he also says, and of me is prisoner. The weighty, vital truth of the Apostle Paul concerning a man glorified at the right hand [00:48:05] of God and of a power sent down here on earth that your life and mine might exhibit the powers of that blessed man and not of the flesh. And that I might have before me that blessed object of a Christ in glory, that he might be the all-absorbing thing of my life in order that I might function here in the assembly, which is the body of Christ, to manifest for the pleasure of God the features of Christ in praise and glory in the house of God, the ministry of Paul. Do I value it? You

remember, there is one that appears in the Colossian epistle, epistle that we need to take great heed of today, ministry for the last days, brethren, Colossians. We read of one there, Epaphras, of whom you'll read of at the end of Philemon, one little [00:49:02] mention of him, my fellow prisoner.

My fellow prisoner.

There's nobody else as far as I can find whom Paul calls a fellow prisoner but Epaphras. Brethren, he valued what Paul had got so much that he was prepared to be in prison with him. Can that be said of me? Paul speaks of Timothy of the things thou hast heard of me. Commit to faithful men, encourage them. All that these things might be held and valued, they are vital. They concern the testimony of God. So, Paul, I must close.

He encourages Timothy to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Brethren, there's ample supply to stand for God in these dark days. Perilous times, they are.

[00:50:03] And they're going to get worse, if the Lord daring. Oh, what a need there is for fidelity to Christ. A faith that goes out to him and a love for the brethren to bind them together and to encourage them. Brethren, let us seek to encourage one another to hold fast till the Lord should come. So, Paul speaks of himself at the end as a wonderful example. He says, the time of my departure draweth near. He says, I have fought a good fight. He says, I'll finish my cause. And there is nothing to reclaim or regret in that for him. The bondman of Christ Jesus. The apostle Paul. The disciple of Jesus. He says, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. [00:51:05] Oh, how it spurred his soul on. The reward, never the motive for service, but the blessed encouragement, by the way, that there at the end of that course, there was for him a crown of righteousness, which the righteous judge would give him. Paul knew it. Oh, beloved brethren, there is great encouragement. On a coming day, it will be manifest what you and I may have stood for in fidelity of Christ to Christ. In seeking to encourage the brethren, in seeking to stand for the truth of God, in a coming day, there will be a crown of righteousness, not only for Paul, but those who love his appearing. God, give us grace to hold fast. Brethren, the time is short. God, give us grace to value rightly what we are in the blessed position of having received [00:52:06] from men who have gone before. Of a faith in Christ, glorified at the right hand, in a position of privilege here where we can function in the assembly for the pleasure of God. Let us not give way. Let us be true to Christ. Paul says to Timothy, come and see me soon.

Come and see me soon, Timothy. Why? Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.

Oh, beloved brethren, Paul felt the departure of Demas. Let us not dishonor the Lord that has called us to himself into a path of separation, apart [00:53:02] from everything in this world that crucified him, in order that we might move here for his pleasure. Demas threw it overboard. How sad. God, give us grace to hold fast until he come.