

COMMITMENT

Sunday Morning: February 8, 2004

Text: Colossians 3:23-25 "And whatsoever ye **do, do it heartily, as to the Lord**, and not unto men; 24. Knowing that of the Lord **ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance**: for ye **serve** the Lord Christ. 25. But he that doeth **wrong shall receive for the wrong** which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

Past few Sundays we've been preaching that it does make a difference how you live. And this morning I want to talk about our commitment to the Lord. First thing that needs to be taken care of and I think all of us appreciate that is the fact that we need to make sure that we're part of the family of God. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, made it possible for us to be born again; to be born from above. And it's, we don't have to do anything for that, there's only one place in the Bible where the question of how to be saved is in the question and the word 'saved' is in the answer and the Philippian jailer believing he had lost prisoners would have been executed by the Roman government for losing prisoners, and he knew he wasn't ready to die. And so he brought his sword with him and a lantern and he went in to the jail to find that all the prisoners were there. Paul and Silas even though a great earthquake had opened the doors. And the jailer knew he wasn't ready to die. And he wanted what Paul and Silas had. So he asked Paul, He says what must I do to be saved. I tell you, what an exciting question! I enjoy hearing that question! You know why? Because I have the answer! Paul gave him the answer. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved". Not complicated, not difficult to understand; it's to believe on what Jesus Christ did on the cross, he died for sinners and if we were to accept what he did for us, we would be saved. And that's what Paul told the Philippian jailer. Now, once you're in the family, as a child, we can either behave or we can misbehave. I think all of us have experienced the hickory stick, as we would say at home when we misbehave! And the same thing applies to the Lord's family. Now there's a time when the Lord disciplines us now, restricts us, causes us difficulty even this table right here is a tool that God uses to help us to get our attention. Sometimes it's difficult, you know just a tap on the shoulder sometimes doesn't work. We have to have our hands thumped! I've had my hands thumped a time or two when my teacher couldn't get my attention! Or my mother couldn't get my attention; she got it when my head was thumped! And God has to sometimes thump our heads, a little more severe! And we ought to be thankful that God is interested in doing that, we ought to be thankful that our parents wanted to help us and God wants to help us too! But you know there are sometimes when even a thump on the head or a lick on the bottom won't, we won't change and so there are consequences! In society today they are put in to prison and we have been talking about God putting some of His kids that will not obey and will not respond, will put them in prison. Now that's not now, God's not a jailer today; God's not running a jail today. When there will be a time for prison is during the millennial reign of Christ where Jesus Christ will rule and reign from the heavens. He will be the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings and He will take out all of those who offend out of His Kingdom and He uses several terms to help us appreciate the fact that we're not going to like what He's going to do to us. In Luke chapter twelve it talks about the servant, He said, 'My Lord delays his coming.' And He begins to eat, drink and to be drunken and beat up on people – menservants and maidservants, those in the family and it says the Lord's going to beat him with many stripes. I think this is a figurative term, I don't think that spanking is what is going to happen or being beaten with many stripes necessarily. It's just something's going to happen that we're not going to like. I don't know about you but I didn't like it when I was getting a licking! There came a time when the hickory stick off the bush in the

front porch didn't bother me, so my mother went and got the flax water which was made out of metal! That got my attention! I didn't call that abuse, I just needed a little more persuasion and a little hickory stick wouldn't do it! But anyway, beaten with many stripes – the point is this, no one like to go to jail, no one wants to be beaten with many stripes but let me tell you, if you're a child of God and you won't behave and you won't live for the Lord, then there are consequences to pay. And there's a lot of teaching today in the church that when you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you don't have to worry about the future, that's a lie! You're in the family, you will not spend eternity in the Lake of Fire but you might be hurt of the lake of Fire. It says that Jesus Christ is going to baptize us in the Holy Ghost and in fire! The Holy Ghost is literal, the fire is literal and so therefore there is a baptism in fire to test our works. And the works of wood, hay and stubble will burn! The works of gold, silver and precious stone will stand the test. They will not be consumed in the fire. And let me tell you if your whole life's works are consumed in ashes and smoke and flame, that's not going to be a very happy time. Because I'm going to tell you this, there's no fire insurance at the Judgment Seat of Christ! If your works are burned, you're not going to have them added back because you had insurance. I just think about Job when he lost his children, his business, you know what Job said? The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. He did not say blessed be the name of the insurance company that's going to give it all back to me! But anyway, so what God is interested in us doing is making a commitment to Him and commitments cost you at times. Being committed to one woman for life, it's not always easy. But it's what God wants us to do. A commitment to your wife or your husband or your spouse and the roads may be rough, but God is interested in commitment. In Colossians, looking at our notes, in Colossians chapter three verses twenty-three through twenty-five, it says

"And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

This passage of scripture is talking to those who know the Lord Jesus Christ. And He's saying whatever you do; you do it wholeheartedly to Him. You honor Him by serving Him and you don't honor man. When you honor man you are creating wood, hay and stubble. If you're serving to be seen of men that will be consumed at the Judgment Seat of Christ but when we serve the Lord heartily from the heart, we're going to receive the reward of the inheritance. In the scriptures, the word 'inheritance has to do with rewards, not salvation. You don't inherit salvation. There are passages of scripture that sound like you do but remember this, inheritance is a family matter. It's not getting you into the family. You don't inherit getting in to the family! But you inherit things that the deceased wants to honor you with. Either he may make you the head of the company or he might give you money or there are different things that come with the inheritance and so, the reward of the inheritance! It's the inheritance that is a reward based upon what? Service, and because you serve the Lord Christ! But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong, which he hath done, that's the thing that is missing in the message today. You will receive for the wrong that you do. Obviously if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, you will spend eternity in the Lake of fire but if you are saved and you're not serving the Lord from the heart, you're going to receive for that but if you do serve the lord from your heart, you're going to receive for that and you're going to like what you're going to get. And the Word of God says very plainly 'Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for them that love Him'.

And Jesus told His disciples if you love me, you'll do what? You'll keep my commandments, you'll behave; you will obey me. If you don't love me, you won't behave! That's basically what it amounts to, because love means that you honor the individual, okay. Now in second Corinthians chapter five it says

HAVE A DESIRE TO PLEASE

2 Corinthians 5:9-11 "Wherefore we **labour** [present middle, ambitious of honor], that, whether present or absent, we may be **accepted** [pleasing to] of him. **10.** For we must all appear before the **judgment seat** of Christ; that every one may **receive** the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, **whether it be good or bad** [evil]. **11.** Knowing therefore the **terror** [fear] of the Lord, **we persuade men.** . . ."

The word 'labour' is an interesting word; it means to be ambitious of honor. Paul says wherefore we ambitiously seek honor, whether present or absent we may be accepted of him or well pleasing to him. If we are well pleasing to Him, He's going to honor us in His coming Kingdom, and how does He honor us? He makes us a lord or He makes us a king, He puts us in positions of honor. Obviously a king has honor and that's what's going to happen during the millennial reign of Christ. The word 'bad' can be translated 'evil'. At the judgment seat of Christ you're going to receive for the things that you've done. If you've done good, you're going to receive reward. If you've done evil or bad, you're going to also receive a reward but that reward is not going to be fun. You're not going to like it. In fact it might even bring a few tears. The Bible speaks of weeping and gnashing of teeth, well, everybody thinks that weeping and gnashing of teeth are the lost. But let me tell you, what we've been looking over the last few weeks, weeping gnashing of teeth applies to saved rebellious hardheaded stiff-necked kids. Okay? So we just need to keep that in mind! Now, Paul continues here in verse eleven, 'knowing therefore the terror of the Lord. Actually, a better translation of that word, 'terror' is fear. Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord. Paul says I respect this judgment seat to the extent that I am going to persuade men. Persuade them to do what? Well what he said in verse nine, we have an ambition for honor and acceptance at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul says I am going to encourage other believers to stand in His presence approved. Now, there's a warning about our works and that's First Corinthians chapter six verses nine through ten

THE WARNING

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 "Know ye not that the **unrighteous** [unjust] shall not **inherit** the **kingdom** of God? Be not deceived: **neither** fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **10.** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall **inherit** the **kingdom** of God."

The unrighteous or the unjust or the disobedient, the hardheaded, the stiff-necked that won't comply shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. You know what that's telling us? The Kingdom of God is a reward! It is inherited. And if you're unjust, if you are disobedient and incorrigible, in other words, you won't change, you're going to lose your inheritance. Have you ever heard of anybody losing their inheritance? Sure! 'Been plenty of people that done that and it's because of what they've done to that individual. But anyway, if you're unjust, you will not inherit the Kingdom of God. You live in these habits of sin, you're going to be excluded from rewards. You might as well as forget rewards. You won't have them! And if you lose your rewards, it reminds me of Esau. Remember Esau? He despised his birthright. As the first-born son he was in line to get a double portion, he was to get twice as much as Jacob. He was also to get all the

servants in the household; in fact even Jacob was going to be his servant. He despised his birthright and you know what? He lost all of that. And it tells us in Hebrews chapter twelve that Esau sought it with tears, He wept because of what he lost. We need to keep that in mind. And so if we are unjust, if we're disobedient, you can count on it you will not have an inheritance. You just won't have a reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. In Mathew chapter nineteen here we have a fellow that's come up to Jesus and he wants to know how he can inherit the Kingdom of God.

TO INHERIT THE KINGDOM

Matthew 19:16-17 "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, **what good thing shall I do**, that I may **have** (inherit, Luke 10:25; 18:18) **eternal** [agelasting] **life**? 17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God*: but if thou wilt **enter** (not just see) into **life** (for the millennial age), **keep the commandments** (be just).

"... have" and it's the word inherit, it's found in Luke chapter ten verse twenty five and also eighteen, in other words, he's asking what must I do or what good thing should do that I may have or inherit eternal life. Now the word, 'eternal' is an interesting word, it's the Greek word 'ion'. It's the word that if used as the basis of the word 'eon.' And it doesn't mean eternity. In fact there is no Greek word, there is no single Greek word even in Classical Greek that means eternity. The way the Greeks say 'eternity' is from the ages unto the ages. Eternity is from one age to the next age to the next age. Now here it's talking about a specific age, a singular age and it's the millennial age. Because that's when we enter in to our inheritance when Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning for a thousand years and that's coming and that coming reign of Christ is not very far away. But anyway, he says what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life, or life for the coming age. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt **enter** into life, not just see it but enter in to it, you know, that's the Millennial age, keep the commandments you've got to be just, okay? By the way, let me just emphasize the fact, the word here is enter and not see. Jesus told Nicodemus, 'except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God'. There's a difference between seeing and entering. Right now we are seeing a lot of hoopla about the Presidency, okay? But there's going to be one guy that's going to enter in to being the President. There's a difference between seeing and entering. And that's the same thing about there's a difference between seeing the Kingdom and ruling and reigning in the Kingdom with the Lord. So he says, if thou wilt enter into the millennial age or life in the millennial age, be obedient and in verse twenty

COMMITMENT TO FAITH

Matthew 19:20-21 "The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21. Jesus said unto him, **If** thou wilt be **perfect** [complete], go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have **treasure in heaven**: and come *and* **follow me**."

In other words, he's kept the commandments, what lack I yet? In other words, that wasn't enough. Just behaving was not enough, okay? And Jesus said unto him if thou wilt be perfect, or complete. That word, perfect there doesn't mean he's going to be perfect, he says if you want to be complete and have it all together when you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ, this is what you got to do, sell all you have or sell all that you have and give to the poor and thou shall have treasure in heaven and come follow me. Now, a lot of people have tried this, sell all

you have and gave it to the poor and they still aren't any better off. Because you know what? They never trust the Lord. What the Lord is telling the man here is this, you're just; now what you need to do is to live by faith. When you sell you have and give to the poor whom do you trust to take care of you? You trust the Lord to take care of you! That's called living by faith. Now if you have all the money that this man had you wouldn't be praying, "lord give us this day our daily bread, would you? You'd go down by the bakery. I use that illustration over and over again. You don't have to pray, when you got a million dollars or ten million dollars, you're not worried about what kind of food's going to be on your plate but when you haven't got anything, you need to trust the Lord. Now this was a situation for this individual, the Lord's not telling every one of his kids to sell all he has and give to the poor. Because God uses the rich to finance things that he wants financed and he tells the rich how to behave in First Timothy chapter six, so let's go on. The main thing here is this, what he's teaching us is this, to enter the Kingdom you got to be just and you need to trust the Lord, you need to live by faith day by day. Now in Mathew chapter sixteen verse twenty-four through twenty-five it says

FOLLOWING CHRIST

Matthew 16:24-25 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his cross, and **follow me**. 25. For whosoever will **save his life** shall lose it: and whosoever will **lose his life** for my sake shall find it.

Now that's quite a mouth full! First of all the Lord says, if you want to be, if any man's going to come after me he's got to deny himself. If you're going to follow the Lord, you're going to have to deny who? You're going to have to deny yourself some things! Some things that you really want to do. Because a lot of things that we do, what we really want to do really are not what the Lord want s for us to do. So we need to deny ourselves, we need to take up our cross, that is a place of crucifixion or dying and follow me. That's the same thing that the Lord told the rich man, he says if you want treasures in heaven, you're going to have to follow me. And so he's talking to his disciple, he says you've got to follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. What do you mean by saving your life? Doing your own thing! Leaving God out of your plans and purposes at this present time. Because if you leave God out now, you know who He's going to leave out in that day? He's going to leave you out! (The consequences' part of it.) And then he goes on he says but if you will lose your life for my sake, and I tell you, when you sell all you have and give to the poor, you've what? You've lost your life, haven't you? You've lost your security blanket. And you know what? God says if you lose all you have for me, I'm going to give it to you more than you can understand and appreciate. In fact in John twelve it tells us

TO LOSE YOUR LIFE

John 12:24-26 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die**, it abideth alone: but **if it die**, it **bringeth** forth much **fruit**. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that **hateth his life** in this world **shall keep** it unto [leading to] life eternal [agelasting]. 26. If any man **serve** me, let him **follow** me; and where I am, there shall also my **servant** be: if any man **serve** me, **him will my Father honour** (with agelasting life in the kingdom)."

So it has to do with dying to self, dying to what I desire. You want the Father to honor you? You die to your own plans and purposes and you follow the Lord and you serve the Lord and you pay the price that it's going to take to do that and Jesus said, My Father will honor you! I

want that for me! I want that! Have you ever had your father reach around your shoulder and say this is my son, I'm really pleased with this young man. Maybe some of us really haven't had that happen. I didn't have that happen to me, but I tell you, my heavenly father is the one who counts. My father's approval will only last for, you know, a month or maybe not even that long. But anyway, so I want to tell you, I want the honor that my heavenly father can give me. Then back in Mathew chapter sixteen, he's talking about a profitable servant. Verse twenty-six

A PROFITABLE SERVANT

Matthew 16:26-27 "For what is a (saved) **man profited**, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [life in the kingdom age]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [life in the kingdom age]? 27. For the **Son of man shall come** in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall **reward** every man **according to his works.**"

I want a reward! I want the reward of the inheritance and to get it I must follow the Lord and I must surrender things that would hinder me from doing what the Lord would have me to do. And if money will hinder me from doing that, you need to reduce it. He didn't want you to, you don't have to get rid of everything, if you understand what I'm saying. Just that which hinders you. Now, it will cost you. In Luke chapter fourteen verses twenty-six through twenty-eight

IT WILL COST YOU

Luke 14:26-28 "If any *man* come to me, and **hate not** his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, **yea, and his own life also**, he **cannot** be my **disciple**. 27. And whosoever doth not **bear his cross**, and **come after me**, **cannot** be my **disciple**. 28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and **counteth the cost**, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*?"

When you put Jesus Christ first, you may lose some very good friends. And I'm not even talking about the friends next door; I'm talking about the friends in your own house. You follow the Lord and you honor him, some very close people may not like it! The word 'hate' in this verse is a relative term. We're not to hate literally our father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, but the word, 'hate' here has to do with putting the Lord first and putting them second. In fact we're even to put our own life and ambitions last and His plans and purposes for us, first. We've talked about hating your family or putting the Lord before your family. I'm reminded of the passage in Mathew chapter ten where the Lord says, Think not that I've come to bring peace on earth; I came not to bring peace but a sword. This is verse thirty-four of Mathew ten. For I am come to set a man at variance with his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. So it does cost you. And it costs us if we expect to rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming Kingdom. Verse twenty-seven back in Luke chapter fourteen it says "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple". So we have to make a choice and these choices that we make do bring consequences to bear and it is costly at times and we must bear this cross. A cross is a place of suffering, a cross is a place of death and to be able to bear the cross we must die to self and be committed to the Lord. One of the things that this passage in Luke chapter fourteen is encouraging us to do is to count the cost. If you want to rule and reign, it's going to cost. You have to consider the fact of the cost, is that what you are willing to pay? Verse twenty-eight,

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*?” I don’t know that we, about the point having sufficient to finish it, the word ‘sufficient’ by the way is in italics and has been added but we need to count the cost. We need to be aware of the cost that it will take to rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming Kingdom. It will cost and it will be costly! But let me tell you, I do believe that the cost is worth whatever it is that we might hear a “well done thou good and faithful servant.” So the Lord wants us to be committed to the point where we will pay whatever it takes, suffer the cost whatever it is and in Luke chapter nine verse sixty-two

NEED FOR COMMITMENT

Luke 9:62 "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the **plow**, and looking back, is fit for the **kingdom of God**."

So that’s the reason why we are exhorted to count the cost and by putting our hand to the plow to do the work, to finish the course, then if we don’t then we’re not going to be fit to rule and reign in the coming kingdom. Another thing that we need to do to rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ and our commitment and that is to continue in the faith, continue pleasing God. We’re all familiar with Hebrews chapter eleven verse six, “without faith it is impossible to please Him “ and we need to be encouraged to continue pleasing Him.

CONTINUE IN THE FAITH

Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to **continue in the faith**, and that we must through much **tribulation enter into the kingdom of God**."

It takes being confident that what God has promised He is able to deliver and He has promised those that are faithful will rule and reign with Him and so we need to continue in the faith knowing that we through much tribulation will enter into the Kingdom. And of course entering into the Kingdom has to do with ruling and reigning and participating in the administration of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of the Heavens.

CONTINUE IN THE FAITH

Colossians 1:23 "If ye **continue in the faith grounded and settled**, and *be not moved away* from the **hope of the gospel**, . . . "

So we’re to continue in the faith. And we’re to be grounded and settled. It takes being grounded and settles and not moved away from the hope. One of the things that helps us to continue in the faith is the hope of the Gospel. The hope of the Gospel is that of glory. Ruling and reigning. And we need to continue in the faith grounded and settled. In other words our mind is made up. We know where we’re headed. We know what we’re preferring and we’re laying hold on the hope that is set before us and we see that the hope is the hope of glory in Colossians one twenty-seven.

HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

Colossians 1:27 ". . . which is Christ in you, the **hope of [the] glory**:"

Another thing that Paul encourages us to do is

CONTINUE IN PRAYER

Colossians 4:2 "**Continue in prayer**, and **watch** in the same with thanksgiving;"

Along with prayer is watching – anticipation. Those who watch are anticipating something and prayer is essential, particularly when it comes to being faithful because if we don't pray we sure are liable to faint. Men ought always to pray and not to faint is the exhortation. Now we're to continue in prayer and watch. In First Timothy chapter four verse sixteen it says

CONTINUE IN DOCTRINE

1 Timothy 4:16 "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; **continue** in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

Another thing to consider and be committed to is to Bible study, to doctrine. We need to take heed to ourselves. This is my personal responsibility to continue in doctrine and knowing that if I will continue in doctrine and guarding my heart and my thoughts, with that doctrine I will not only save myself, that is deliver myself from the bondage of the world, the flesh and the devil that is trying to take control of our lives today and also those that hear, I'm encouraging all of us to continue in the faith. Not only that to continue in His grace. We need to continue in His grace, we need to continue in His Word. And it's through the preaching and the teaching of doctrine that we are all encouraged to be committed to the race that is set before us. So we need to take heed to ourselves and unto doctrine and continue in them knowing that we will one day be delivered from, we will deliver ourselves from the world, the flesh and the devil and them that hear the preaching of the word as well. The Lord told those who believed on Him in John eight thirty-one when Jesus said unto those Jews which believed on Him,

TIME IN HIS WORD

John 8:31 "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye **continue in my word, then** are ye my **disciples** indeed;"

Discipleship means continuing in His Word. Doctrine is continuing in His Word. In fact it's essential for us to give diligence in rightly dividing the Word of truth. You find that in Second Timothy two fifteen where we're encouraged to study. The word 'study' is really 'give diligence'

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD

2 Timothy 2:15 "**Study** [give diligence] to **show** [present] thyself **approved** unto God, a **workman** that needeth **not** to be **ashamed, rightly dividing the word** of truth."

The word 'study' means to give diligence. 'To show' in the present tense can be translated 'to present' thyself approved unto God. You want to be approved unto God? You want to hear 'well done thou good and faithful servant'? We need to be workmen that needeth not to be ashamed and how can we keep from becoming ashamed? Is rightly dividing the word of truth! That is, the study of the Word of God, the study of the scriptures, but we need to continue in doctrine. And that means to rightly divide the word of truth. And Paul told Timothy in Second Timothy three fourteen

CONTINUE LEARNING

2 Timothy 3:14 "But **continue** thou in the things which thou hast **learned** and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*;"

Commitment is more than just simply knowing doctrine. We have to **continue** in the things which we have learned. That is, we need to practice, we need to obey, we need to believe and we need to continue learning the scriptures and obeying the scriptures and we need to know

those who teach them to us as well. I mentioned a while ago that we need to continue in His grace and we find that in Acts chapter thirteen verse forty-three

CONTINUE IN GRACE

Acts 13:43 "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to **continue in the grace of God.**"

Persuading, isn't that interesting? They needed to be persuaded to continue in the grace of God. They needed to be encouraged to have grace whereby they may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. Find that in Hebrews twelve twenty-eight. But here, what is the grace of God? Second Corinthians chapter twelve verses nine and ten tells us the grace of God is the power of Christ. "He" that is the Lord said unto Paul

GRACE FOR STRENGTH

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "And he said unto me, **My grace** is sufficient for thee: for **my strength** is made perfect in (your) **weakness**. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **10.** Therefore I take **pleasure in infirmities**, in **reproaches**, in **necessities**, in **persecutions**, in **distresses** for Christ's sake: for when I am **weak**, then **am I strong.**"

For us to continue in the grace of God is to continue in the power of Christ. And in continuing in the power of Christ, we're letting Christ work through us His power and which gives **Him** honor and glory and not working in our own strength. Paul says "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses", isn't that interesting? If we're going to rule and reign, we're going to have tribulations to enter the Kingdom. And here's just a small list, infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecution, distresses, that's part of the cross that Paul bore and it's for Christ's sake. And when we're experiencing these difficulties in life and this persecution in life, Paul says, 'When I am weak, then I am made strong by the grace of Christ'. So therefore we need to appropriate His grace, because we're going to have trouble in our life and it takes the power of Christ for us to do that. In Mark chapter ten verse thirty it says

WITH PERSECUTIONS

Mark 10:30 "But he shall [μη, may not] **receive** an hundredfold now in this **time** (age, implied), houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with **persecutions**; and in the world [age] **to come** [the one coming] **eternal** [agelasting kingdom] **life.**"

In fact the word, μη is found in the text in the first part of this verse, which is 'may not'. You may not have houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and so forth but we know that we will have persecution, in fact if we will endure this then the latter part of this verse says, "in the age to come eternal life' or age lasting Kingdom life. So, the age that's coming is what we're anticipating; ruling and reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ. So what is needed? We need His grace. Where do we get His grace? At the throne of grace, and the reason we need His grace is found in Hebrews chapter twelve verse twenty-eight and twenty-nine

NEED FOR GRACE

Hebrews 12:28-29 "Wherefore we receiving a **kingdom** which **cannot be moved**, let us [may we] have [present active] grace, whereby we may **serve** God **acceptably** with reverence and godly fear: 29. For our God *is* a consuming **fire**."

The word 'let us have' is actually a present active subjunctive, meaning we need to have grace all the time. We need to be active in having that grace because the subjunctive tells us that we may not have that grace. And it's a choice of ours* (40:27) if we desire to enter the Kingdom, the rules and laws and requirements for entrance into that Kingdom have been established and they are not going to move. They are not going to change and it takes the grace of God to endure and to be committed to the Lord to finish. Having put our hands to the plow we will not turn back, we will continue doing the work the Lord has called us to do and it takes the grace of God for us to serve Him acceptably. Serving Him acceptably will provide us a 'well done thou good and profitable servant, you've been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things'. And so that's the objective of a person who desires to be approved by the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Lord told His disciples when He delivered unto them ten pounds in Luke chapter nineteen verse thirteen

OCCUPY TILL I COME

Luke 19:13 "And he called his ten **servants**, and **delivered** them **ten pounds**, and said unto them, **Occupy** till I come."

We don't need to be idle; we need to be affirming our commitment in our thoughts and among our fellowship with each other. Stirring each other up to continue the race and if a brother is weak and struggling, it's time for prayer and administering the word. So we need to occupy till He comes. And lastly in closing the message, in First Corinthians chapter fifteen verse fifty-eight

BE UNMOVEABLE

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved **brethren**, be ye **stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding** in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour [toil, weariness] is **not in vain** in the Lord."

You're committed to ruling, committed to standing in His presence approved and to rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ, your labor, your toil, that word 'labor' can be translated 'toil' or 'weariness'; your labor, your toil, your persecution, your troubles, going back to what Paul says, infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses, let me tell you, they're not going to be in vain. The light affliction that we suffer cannot be compared with the glory that will be revealed.

Father, I just pray that you would bless this message to each of our hearts. May we take the hope of glory serious and help us, Father, to be committed to standing in Your presence approved and hearing 'Well done thou good and faithful servant'. Thank you again for your faithfulness to us and we pray Lord, you'd bless us be faithful to you. In Jesus Christ' name we pray, Amen