

## **TRIUMPHANT LIVING**

**Taught by Bruce Bickel**

**Session: February 1, 2013**

Gracious, merciful God, it is a wonderful privilege we have to sit at your feet; it is because of the accomplishments of your Son and the personal work of our Lord Jesus Christ that we are here today. Father, there is only one reason that we are not on our way to hell, and that is because of your mercy to us and your grace. Lord, remind us that it is because of you that we are everything that we are. Teach us now, Lord, from your Word that we may have insight as the result of your Holy Spirit being our teacher; may He guide us into all truth. And may you be pleased once again, as you so faithfully do, to open our eyes that we might behold you more clearly for Christ's sake. Amen.

Don. [Beautiful Music].

Father, we thank you for your faithfulness, which to us is so needed, so gracious, and we are so dependent upon it. We thank you for your faithfulness. In Jesus' name. Amen

Turn in your Bibles, please, to the Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians. We are continuing our study of Triumphant Living. It is Paul's description of defending his lifestyle in the covenant relationship under grace. We are referring to this as the new covenant lifestyle. We want to pick it up today in Chapter 3, verses 4 through 6; but I am going to begin reading in Chapter 3, verse 1. I want to thank Don for his excellent work and presentation last week on the sufficiency of Christ, the adequacy of Christ. [APPLAUSE]. Don, thank you very much, I was greatly blest by your outline and your message. Last week Don covered the adequacy of Christ in life and death.

Today we want to take a look at the adequacy of Christ in ministry. How is it that we receive the adequacy of the Lord Jesus Christ to help us become servants of a new covenant, of a new relationship, which is accomplished as the result of the shed blood of Christ?

So we pick this up in Chapter 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians, verse 1. "Are we beginning to commend ourselves again, or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you, or from you? You are our letter written in our hearts, known and read by all men, being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ toward God; not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God who has made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit, for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life."

When you talk about confidence and if you listen to every motivational speaker that you will ever hear, they will talk about confidence. They will tell us such things as confidence makes up for lack of ability. You may not have the greatest skill set and you may not have the greatest experience but as long as you are confident, you can make up for it. Well, there may be some value in that understanding but we want to look at it in a different way of our being confident.

The Scripture uses the word adequacy, which is the same thing in our vernacular for confidence, and Paul is talking about adequacy in ministry today as it relates to our life in the new covenant. When we talk about the new covenant, we are talking about the new covenant of grace. There are two segments of this, two dispensations of it, if you would; there is the old section of it and the new section of it. We are now talking about the new section of the covenant of grace, which was instituted because of the accomplishments of the personal work of Christ.

We refer to it as the new covenant because that is how Jesus referred to it when He said, "This is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you, as often as you do this, do this in remembrance of Me." In other words, He is calling attention to the new arrangement that is a result of the accomplishments of His shed blood on the Cross. So that is why I refer to it as new. There is nothing new in its essence or value because the old testament saints were saved the same way as the new testament saints are; and they came under the same justification as the new testament saints. There are two different dispensations or two demonstrations of the covenant of grace. There is the old, which is the law, and the new, which is the result of the shed blood of Christ.

We are now talking about life in the new arrangement as a result of our understanding of the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. It is all one covenant known as the covenant of grace with just two different demonstrations, or two different dispensations. We are now talking about that part of our lifestyle, which is a result of our adequacy coming from the accomplishments of the personal work of Christ. That is what gives us confidence.

So Paul is talking about confidence in ministry and notice verse 3. He is saying to the church at Corinth, "The reason I'm so confident about what happened to you is because the evidence of your lifestyle is manifested outwardly." In other words, there is some evidence in your life that you are really true believers and true followers of Christ; that it is obvious that you are justified by faith; it is obvious that you have saving faith because there are manifestations in your outward conduct. He is teaching us in verse 3, "Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ." In other words, he is saying the true way to evaluate ministry is not by raised hands or activities, or how much money you raise; it is really the quality of life of the people you serve. He says, "You know, it is obvious that you are a letter from Christ; something has happened to you internally where God has written the laws of His heart into your heart, not just into your mind; and you are evidenced by the choices you are making and the decisions you are making, and the way you live." He is saying, "The great confidence I have in my ministry is to realize that you are the product of the adequacy of Christ working through me and that something has happened to you that gives evidence in external conduct. He is saying that you evaluate ministry by the altered lifestyle of the people you serve, not by the number of things that we do.

Now, one of the things we need to understand and what Paul is talking about is a thankful life that we have seen, it is a life of unquestionable optimism, a successful life of unvarying triumph, it is a consequential life of unforgettable impact, it is a faithful life of unimpeachable integrity with the Word, and it is an authentic life of undeniable reality.

So, therefore, it is no wonder then that Paul talks about being confident in ministry. Look at verse 4, “Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.” What Paul is saying is that he is confident, not in his own ability, but he is confident in the fact that God works through him in this new arrangement because of the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. So we can have a lot of confidence, but our confidence is in whom? It is really in Christ, not ourselves. That is the difference. Your motivational speakers are going to say you need to have a positive mental attitude. We need to have a positive mental attitude about who God is. And we need to have a positive mental attitude about our inabilities. We need to have a positive mental attitude of realizing that He alone is adequate alone to do the things He wants to do. That is why we are talking today about adequacy in ministry.

Paul is saying that the reason that he is so confident is that he sees the product of what God has done in your life; that you are actually a letter written by the hand of God, and He has now taken His laws and He has not written it on hearts of stone but He has written it on hearts of flesh. What has happened is, that all of a sudden there is a group of people in the Corinthian Church whose disposition and desires have changed. The disposition has changed, the desires have changed, and Paul says, “That is what gives me confidence, realizing that you are a product of what God has done in His mercy and His grace through the personal work of Christ.

He now talks about being adequate or being confident. Let’s take a quick look and he explains how and why he is confident and the results of this confidence.

First of all, why is he confident? That is because God always leads in triumphal procession. We saw that in Chapter 2, “God always, ALWAYS, always leads in triumph.” Why is it that you and I can be confident, why is it that we can realize that we have the adequacy of Christ? Because we always know that God always leads in triumph. Whatever God does is a triumph. That is what gives us the basis...it is not confidence in our own abilities, it is not confidence in our own training or skill set, or our own experience. It is the realization of one theological fact and that is this, Paul has stressed the whole thing and that is, God always leads in triumph. Now that is what gives us confidence. It does not mean that we can be sloppy in what we do, but it does mean that we have a mind set that says God is the one who is leading; He always leads in triumph, and I just want to make sure that I am following His leading, not creating things of my own, and asking Him to bless it. So the reason that we can be confident is because we know that God always leads.

Secondly, how is it that we can be confident? First, we know that we can be confident because God always leads. Secondly, the question is how can we be confident? It is because we know that our adequacy comes from God. Adequacy comes from Him. He is the resources of our life. He is the resources of our ministry. What are the results of this adequacy? We are made servants of a new covenant. Now you will notice this, “Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant.” In other words: what, why, and how?

The “what” is, we can be confident because we know God always leads. The adequacy comes from Him, the results are you and I have now been equipped to be a servant. What does that mean to be a servant? A servant basically is someone who carries out somebody else’s orders. A servant takes the orders from someone else and now fulfills them and follows them. Notice what we have been made adequate to become--we have been made adequate to become servants of a new relationship.

There is a wonderful contrast here in verse 6, between the old and the new. When we talk about such verses as Romans, Chapter 7, verse 9 wherein Paul says, "I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died." Or Galatians, Chapter 3, verse 10, "For as many as are the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law to perform them."

What he is saying is, there is nothing wrong with the law; it is just that I have been set free from having the law be [UNCLEAR] of earning my salvation. So I am free from the law; he does not mean that he is not bound to obey the law, he is just saying that the law is no longer the means by which I achieve a saving relationship to the personal work of Christ. It is now through His blood that I now receive that salvation. So he is not saying there is anything wrong with the law. The law is still in effect as far as it applies to us.

All he is saying is that you are not under the law in the sense of...it is not the means by which you now achieve or earn your salvation. He is set free from that and he is now in this new arrangement through the blood and the personal work of Christ, for salvation is now by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, revealed in the Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone. So we need to understand that when he says I am free from the law, he is not talking about I have the freedom to be disobedient. He is not saying that; he is saying that at one time the law was the means by which somebody achieved their salvation by trying to be obedient to the external renderings of the law. I am free from that now, and now the adequacy comes because of the personal work of Christ. Do you understand the difference? We need to make sure that we understand that he is not abrogating the law and saying there is nothing good about it.

He is saying I am free from that system of trying to earn my salvation through confidence. You know the passage in Scripture that talks about when the Pharisees came to Jesus and they said, "Rabbi or Teacher, what is the great commandment?" There was a group of Pharisees...now the Pharisees were the political party that basically tried to earn their salvation through external obedience to the law. There were the Ten Commandments and they created 601 of their own. We know historically that the Pharisees had 612 laws, and they had little clicks. There might be some people who liked law number 413, and somebody liked law number 7, and somebody else liked law number 532. And one day a group of them came to Jesus and said, "Master, Rabbi, if you are so smart, which is the great commandment?" They were basically trying to trick Him. They are trying to say, "OK, hotshot, if you are so smart, answer this question"....you can imagine all the Pharisees over here thinking; "Maybe He is going to pick mine." They had little clicks and they followed these Pharisees, and they had little clothespins on their outer garments that had a number on it. That meant, "This is the one law that I think is the most important."

So when they came to Jesus and said, "What is the great commandment?" they were trying to trick Him, and to expose Him because they could say...well one guy would say, "Yes, he picked mine" and all the others would say, "No, He is wrong because He didn't pick mine." It was a gambit...they were trying to trick Him. Jesus answered this question and wrapped all 612 and put it under one statement when He said this, "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." He took 612 of those manmade external laws and put it down into one and said, "Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." He just wrapped it all up in one.

Let me give you some examples of these manmade laws so that you will understand what Paul says when he said, "I'm free from the law." Understand what he is not saying...he is not saying I am not free not to obey, that is not what he is saying. He is saying, "I am free not to have worked to earn my salvation by keeping all these laws. That is what I am free from, because in the new arrangement... because of the shed blood of Christ...my salvation has been accomplished for me." Do you understand that? It is not something that I now achieve, it is something I now receive because salvation is by grace, through faith in Christ alone, to be in the Scripture alone, for the glory of God alone.

Now here is just an example of some of those 612 laws. One of them was this, on the Sabbath a woman could not look into a mirror, see a gray hair and pull it out, because it would be considered work. Could not look into a mirror, see a grey hair, and pull it out on the Sabbath because it would be considered work! You lost your salvation. You were not obedient to the law. That is what Paul is saying.

Another law, if I can remember...oh, this one. You could eat an egg on the Sabbath that was laid by a chicken on the Sabbath, as long as you intended to kill the chicken after you ate it because the egg was laid on the Sabbath. {LAUGHTER} Now how would you like to do that during your salvation? {LAUGHTER} How's that?

You see, that is what they were doing. That is what Paul is saying, there is a whole system of these manmade laws that the Pharisees have created that have subjected people to try to earn their salvation; and he said, "Because of grace, I'm free from that." It does not mean that we abrogate the law and push it aside and are not obedient to the Ten Commandments, not at all. He is saying that you are free from trying to earn your salvation by the keeping of the law. Now Paul is saying, "You want to keep the law now because God has taken a different stand and because of the shed blood of Christ, He has written that law on your heart, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts, and now you have a disposition to want to keep the Ten Commandments. You now have a desire to want to keep the Ten Commandments because things have changed in this new arrangement. He says that is where the adequacy comes from. It comes through faith in the accomplishments of the personal work of Christ.

Several years ago when I toured the Holy Land, I was in a hotel in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Now in the hotel they had two elevators; one was the normal elevator, which had buttons, and the other one was the Shabbat elevator, which had no buttons. You had ten stories in this building and on the Sabbath you would make sure you got into the Sabbath elevator because it didn't have any buttons, because if you pushed any button you would be working on the Shabbat. So you would get on the elevator and if you got off on the third floor, it would open up ten times. Floor number one, the door would come open; floor number two is set up to open automatically because they did not want you to work on the Sabbath and violate the commandment of the law...to keep the Sabbath holy...and not work.

I got on the regular elevator once, not knowing this, and I said, "Excuse me could you push button number 6?" And the person said "Shabbat." I said, "Beg your pardon?" {LAUGHTER} He said, "Shabbat." In other words, "I cannot work on the Sabbath, I cannot push the button 6." Later that night my wife Becky wanted something to drink so I went down to the main desk of the concierge and I gave him \$2.00, American, U.S.A. Dollars and I asked, "Can you exchange this for some coins so I can go down to the coke machine and get my wife a diet coke?" "Shabbat." You cannot exchange money on the Sabbath because it would be work. Now those are extreme examples, but that is what Paul is saying.

He is saying that there is a difference of being set free from those type of manmade laws, which subjects someone from trying to earn their salvation, and understanding that salvation is now by grace through faith in the personal work of Christ because it is a new arrangement, because of the shed blood of Christ.

Now, friends, I don't think we take communion seriously enough, I really don't...I think that we think it is a nice thing we do once a month, or whenever your church offers it. But do you realize what Paul is saying? He is saying that God, in this new arrangement because of the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ, has written His laws on your heart. That is what Paul means when he says, "You are a letter written by Christ for the world to see." He has taken the laws of God, our desire to be obedient, and He changes our disposition and gives us a desire to want to do that, whereas before we only did it to try to earn it. Do you see the difference?

That is why Paul says that there is a completely different understanding about our adequacy now. Our adequacy comes from Him who has provided us the skill sets and all the things that we need, the disposition and the desire to become a servant. Now a servant is one who follows the instructions, or the orders of somebody else. So we are servants of this new arrangement known as the gospel of grace. We become servants, we have been made to do that. As servants, we now live by faith. The Scriptures teach us the righteous shall live by faith. Many of us think that is just a new testament concept but it really is not. You will find that in the old testament as well. It is a consistent concept.

In Romans 1, verse 17, it says, "The righteous man lives by faith." But that is not limited to what we would say in the new covenant or the new testament; you will find that in the old testament in Habakkuk, Chapter 2, verse 4, "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him, for the righteous will live by faith." You see, it is the same concept. How did the old testament saints live? They lived by faith. How do the new testament saints...how do we live in the new covenant? We live by faith. It is the same thing. It is one covenant of grace and now our response is to live by faith. They lived by faith just as much as we do. They were living by faith in the coming of a Messiah who would shed His blood. We now live in faith by the one who did come and who did shed His blood. Either way, it is by faith. The righteous man lives by faith. That is the consistency of the covenant of grace. That is what grace does. Grace changes us so that we have a disposition and the desire to want to live by faith.

Now what is faith? There are many ways of defining it. One of the ways, which you might consider to be helpful, is the acrostic faith...f a i t h...forsaking all, I trust Him. Forsaking all...f a i t h...forsaking all, I trust Him. Now that is what it means to live by faith. That means that when you and I come up against something, we aggressively apply our faith. Faith is not something where you sit back, let go, and let God. I'm not talking about that at all. I'm talking about something that is very, very aggressive. You now have a disposition and desire to want to forsake all your own resources, and realize I don't have the skill to do this, but I now trust you because I'm forsaking all of my own skill set and my own efforts and I am trusting you to be adequate. That is what Paul is talking about. He is saying that you and I live by faith. That is not easy to do. Because our own disposition in our naturalness is, I can take care of that, I can do it. We think that the Christian life is the little red choo choo that says, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can;" when in reality Paul is saying, "I know I can't, but I know you can." I know I can't but I know you can. I know **I can't**, I don't have the resources to do that; but I know **you can**." It is the same thing that Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew, Chapter 5, at the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount when He said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Now the words "poor in spirit" mean I am spiritually bankrupt. This is not a way of demeaning ourselves at all. It just realizes this, that for me to be a servant of this new relationship, this covenant of grace, the adequacy to fulfill those

responsibilities comes from Him and not from me. That is why we walk by faith. In those moments when we are tested, we really have to struggle...we really have to gut it out and say, "Lord, I've got to trust you and the reason I have adequacy is because I know this: that God always leads in triumph."

You go back to the very basics of what Paul wrote us before; why is it that we can have adequacy? Because God always leads in triumph. What is adequacy? Adequacy is living by faith, forsaking all, I trust Him—f i a t h. What are the results of that? You are a servant. You are a servant of a new relationship. God has now given you all the equipment that you will ever need to become the servant that He desires you to be and do.

Let me give you just an example. Living by faith is not an option for us as a believer. It is not an option. Well, I think I'll live by faith today but tomorrow I will not. I will go to church on Sunday and live by faith, but the rest of the week, I will do it on my own. See, that is not an option for us; because here is where Jesus said to His disciples one day when He was telling them, "I will give you whatever you need to know when it comes time for Me to do it. But when they deliver you up"...He is talking about your future life... that you are going to have difficulties as His followers. So this is the message for us.

Matthew 10, verse 19 says, "But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak, for it shall be given to you in that hour what you are to speak." That is adequacy. That is living by faith. It is going into a situation, saying, "Honestly, Lord, I have no idea what I am going to do. I just do not know what to do but I do know this, that you always, always lead in triumph and you have made me adequate to be the person you want me to be, and at the moment you want me to be. And I am going to walk by faith and I am going to trust you to give me the words that I need to say, and I pray that all the things I have been learning at the Friday morning men's group will come to the forefront, and you will hit my C-drive and the words will come out. I am just going to trust you and I am not going to go in there and think I have to manipulate a situation. I am going to be an aggressive responder to what I sense you are doing in my life. That is living by faith. That is not easy, that is not easy because it is contrary to our human nature.

Yes,

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** [UNCLEAR]. *Hebrews, Chapter 11, verse 1, gives a wonderful definition of faith where it says, "Now faith"...this is the NIV "is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." Present tense.*

Yes, Hebrews 11, verse 1. It is a great description. It is faith in the things you do not see. Now many times, and I want to be careful here; many times people say, "I'm going to throw out a fleece." It is basically, "Lord, give me a sign." This is the lowest level of faith to say, "I will respond to this when I see you do something first." It is valid and there are examples of it in the Scriptures, but it is the lowest level of faith. The highest level of faith is what Jay just read. You trust Him when there is no evidence. That is faith. That is what Paul is saying, "You now have the adequacy to trust me in a situation when there is no reason why you should, other than this. "I know that you always, ALWAYS, always lead in triumphal procession." And I am going to trust you. I am going to forsake all my inhibitions, all of my anxiousness, and I am going to trust you...forsaking all, I trust Him. And that is something that we need to work at; faith is something that you work at; it is something that you do; it is something that we have a responsibility to exercise. It is not sitting and letting go and letting God. I am not saying that. I am

saying this is a tough battle in our life. You have to remember this; you have been made adequate to become what...not a hero...but to become what...a servant.

Yes, Tom.

**TOM:** *[UNCLEAR]. Do you want to live in the world? Or do you want to live in the spiritual world? It is the assurance of things not seen...it does not mean [UNCLEAR].*

That is right. Living by faith is not an option for us. It is the theme of both the old and the new covenant.

Yes, Carl.

**CARL:** *Bruce, I think also, that our eyes will deceive us and that is the reason why He said you walk by faith and not by sight. And so, we have to believe that we are already in the midst of the "not yet." In other words [UNCLEAR] what Jesus will do, we want to talk about what He has already done. And so when we walk in what He has already done, then we have faith to believe what He is going to do for us in the present and in the future.*

Yes, Amen. Excellent.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *The Scripture that you read a few minutes ago?*

That would be Matthew 10, verse 19. That has been a verse that has been very applicable to me, especially in the banking world. I am involved in a lot of stuff and I have no idea what I am doing. {LAUGHTER}. I have been there twenty-five years. Somebody came into my office the other day and said, "Can I ask you a question?" My response was, "Well, as long as it is not about banking." {LAUGHTER} I do not know much about banking. But I'll tell you what, I've been in situations day after day, and week after week, and year after year, where I have been thrown into a financially oriented situation and I have no idea what I am doing. That is when I look at Matthew 10, verse 19..."Do not be anxious, I will give you the words to say at just the right time when you need to say it. Just trust me." "Forsake all of your own inhibitions and your anxieties and trust Me" because I know this...God always leads in triumph. I have just been amazed with the things that come out of my mouth that I had not planned to say. I just have to understand it is a function of God's mercy and grace.

Yes, Sig.

**SIG:** *At the end of Hebrews, Chapter 11...it sort of starts out, as Jay mentioned, being certain of all that we do not see, and, of course, this is after...the writer is writing this after Christ has been here, and the resurrection and the ascension...and at the end...I don't know if you want to expound on this [UNCLEAR] but he said all these great people that did these wonderful things...lost their lives, were stoned, and cut in half, and lived in caves, and went about destitute, and persecuted...then he says at the end..."They didn't see what was promised but we did and together with us they would be made perfect." I get a sense that [UNCLEAR] about Christ but I don't know...is that all? I don't mean to say is that "all" but...it just seems a little perplexing that all of these people lived so valiantly without seeing Christ, and yet we know about Christ and it is because of us with them, that they would be made perfect. [UNCLEAR]*

Well, we are both made perfect because it is sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. They were looking forward to Him coming, we look past. That is why I say, what has Jesus done? That is the



real issue. We need to look back and see what He has done, as Carl just summarized for us. So to summarize—they looked forward—we look back—and together we are made perfect because we see how we have applied the sinless blood of Christ in our lives. There is a degree of perfection that is achieved because we all come together, we are centered around the personal work of Christ, and call attention to Him because of His glory

The perfection is that God is glorified by the way that they lived and God is glorified by the way that we live, both of us centered on the personal work of Christ. That is what he is referring to.

Yes.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** [UNCLEAR]. I was in a situation at a convention where I had to do a number of things and a number of things in Christ. [UNCLEAR] of meetings and I didn't know what was going to happen. Normally, I, you know, I tried to [UNCLEAR]. It was completely overwhelming and I said to myself exactly what you say...well, I have been put here for a reason [UNCLEAR]. I was struggling with [UNCLEAR]. Not that it means anything in and of itself but the situation where I had to white knuckle it [UNCLEAR]...I really have made some mistakes in situations where I kind of not let go and said "I'm not going to do that crap, I'm just going to trust," [UNCLEAR] and allow this to play out [UNCLEAR].

No, that's a good illustration. That is a very good illustration. The difference of between "my white knuckling it" and "my forsaking all, trusting him..." There is a difference of how that is all going to wash out. Now that does not mean that we don't do our preplanning. It doesn't mean that. You trust your planning just as much as you do your delivery. So we work our tails off to work and plan as much as we can, because I'm trusting Him in my planning and my operations in my research, and I am meekly trusting Him when I deliver that. So it doesn't mean that you just sit back and say, "Oh God, just do your thing." We are not talking about that. There is a degree in your work and research and in your planning, you work as hard as you can because you know this, "Lord I am trusting you in my research." That is like preparing a sermon; you just don't stand in the pulpit and say, "OK, Lord, do your thing," flip the switch and out come the words. No, we are not talking about that.

You see, you are talking about work and by faith in the thirty hours that you study in your sanctuary of your own office to put the sermon together; you are studying and walking by faith as much as you are teaching it. That's what we are studying about. So do not think that this is just letting go and letting God; no, not at all. We are saying it is in all aspects of your life; you have the adequacy to plan well, to work hard, and you also have the adequacy to deliver it well.

Yes, Bill.

**BILL:** *This work of mindset, as you're saying, this is not saying how you believe or not prepare but [UNCLEAR] to worry or not to worry in the preparation.*

There you go, that's it. Notice, "Do not be anxious." Matthew 10, verse 19. Don't be anxious about what you are going to say, that is what Bill is talking about. Don't worry about that. You see, what is it that anxiety and worry do? It really destroys us in our ability to become a servant. We think that the ability and the adequacy relies upon us. So those that agree were, yes, you work as hard as you can, you are just not anxious about it or worrying about it because you know this: God alone is the adequate source of all this, and even in my preparation and study, He is the adequacy source. I am not. I walk by faith in doing that as much as I can.

Yes, Ted.

**TED:** *You know, I struggle with this question and it seems like the work we do...we do it because not that the works produce the result, but we work because that is the work that we've been given to do. We have...the Lord is our Master, we are His servants. The Master gives the work for the servant to do. The servant works hard, but the servant really does not know how the Master will use him. It may surprise his servant completely. So, it is not so much... let go and let God, but I think our natural inclination is basically not to let go and let God. That to me...that strikes me as not the problem. The problem is that we want to work hard to make something happen. God and Jesus...Jesus is the one who makes the thing happen and He has given us a job to do. He sort of says "clear out the trash." And we do [UNCLEAR]. And I do not know what He is going to do at the other end of the process.*

Absolutely. The other end is this...

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *We're trash {LAUGHTER}. More trash or more glory? I just don't know. But I'm working hard.*

The end result is this...God always leads in triumph. You see that is the end result. We need to have that be the moniker around here that says, that is the carrot that keeps me going; not if I do this, then that is what is going to happen.

Now Ted has given us a great definition of a servant. Let me just describe this; the word "servant" means, one in relationship to his work. Literally, it means to run errands, to carry out what someone else wants or directs with no concern for the results; meaning, I am not concerned about my achieving something but I want to achieve what the Master wanted me to do. Now there is a difference there... when you take a look at that...between pursuing success and trying to be excellent. We need to forget success and choose excellence.

George Patton said this, "The only thing that success leads to is failure because once you get to the top, you can only go down." There is truth to that. You see so many of us...we are so oriented that we are trying to chase success. I am saying, quit trying to be successful and be excellent. There is a difference. Success is determined by somebody else's disposition or somebody else's definition. You go down to my company and you ask my CEO, "What is the successful banker?" He will give you one definition; you ask my division head and you will get another one; you ask my department head, and you'll get another one; you ask a director of sales and you'll get another one. There are four different definitions of success. Which one am I supposed to achieve? You see, it's like chasing a cat up a tree; you don't know what limb it is going to go out on. And yet we strive so much to say, shall I do this or do that...trying to be successful. What I'm saying and what the Scriptures are saying is, don't strive to be successful, but be excellent. The Christian message is this: to be, before you become. You have to be, before you become. That means be excellent and you will become successful.

Now democracy sets people free externally. Christ sets people free internally. The difficulty with democracy is it only sets people free because it is the reverse of this. It says this, "Let's pass laws, create the right environment, and we will become the person we want to be when the environment is there." Christianity reverses that and says you have to be, so that you become. Become the right person, so that you can become the successful person.

Yes, Bill.

**BILL:** *I think we'll see if we look back at the shape of our country, we at one time were a country that pursued excellence. [UNCLEAR].....[UNCLEAR]...you will be successful.*

Exactly right. You see that is...we need to understand this: the world says, let's create...let's create laws, now they are important laws and we need to do that. Scripture says we need to be obedient to authorities and so we need to be participants in that process. But, the world system basically says let's create the right environment and then we will be the people that we should be. It is a function of the environment. The Christian message reverses that and says this: be the person you need to be and you will become that person. It flips it around. It starts with "be," so you can become. The world says become with the right environment so you will be. It is a complete reversal.

What Paul is saying here is the reason that you and I can choose excellence and not pursue success is because God alone is adequate. Because at the end of the day we know this: you have been qualified in this new arrangement because of the shed blood of Christ to become a servant of the Master of the King, the Kingdom of God. You become a servant who will determine the outcome of the results that you do when you are obedient to the commands that He gives you; and that is this...do you know what adequacy is? At the end of the day, it is this: I know that God always leads in triumph. That is the end result.

And why is that? Because God alone is adequate. What has He made us adequate for? To become a servant to do His bidding.

Yes, Jay.

**JAY:** *I cannot help sharing this. Yesterday I wrote something down from a commentary [UNCLEAR] and it was about the parable of the talents, which is in Matthew 25, and I wrote down this, "The Lord is not going to ask us how much we have done for Him but how faithful we have been to that which He wanted us to do."*

That is excellent. You see the most powerful position that you and I can be in this world is the one God has qualified and equipped us to be. And that is to be what? A servant, a servant of the King. That is the highest level of achievement that you and I can ever receive. That is because of the shed blood of Christ.

Yes, Brian.

**BRIAN:** *This really goes for every single one of us men here. That is what we are called to be. [UNCLEAR] We lead through that servant mentality and for us raising up our children out in the market place to show that absolute servant mentality [UNCLEAR] Matthew 6, verse 31 through 33 [UNCLEAR] but it goes back to your faith and how faith is [UNCLEAR].*

We need to understand and again in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ...we need to be careful that we don't try to turn Jesus into some therapist. We have turned Jesus and God into a Moralistic Therapeutic Deity. We have a tendency to say, "You want peace, then come to Jesus." We offer all the benefits of salvation and not the person of salvation. And what Paul is saying here is that there is a difference. The old arrangement of the law was cold and lifeless. The difference was the commitment to a series of laws to earn your salvation versus a commitment to a living person. We are now in this new

arrangement because of the shed blood of Christ and we are now committed to a living person who has the power because He always leads in triumph.

Yes, Sig.

**SIG:** *[UNCLEAR] Do you think there is any correlation between what you just said [UNCLEAR] God saying that this [UNCLEAR] and God saying that His name is I AM?*

Oh, I'm sure there is some connection. {LAUGHTER}

**SIG:** *[UNCLEAR]. {MUCH LAUGHTER}. [UNCLEAR].*

You're welcome. {MUCH LAUGHTER}

Yes, please.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *Can a non-believer have true excellence?*

Can a non-believer have true excellence?

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *Sure, why not?*

According to the worldly standards; they could be excellent in the world's eyes, but can they be excellent in the Kingdom's eyes? I would say no. We have a different standard of excellence in the Scriptures. That is why we say salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone, and revealed in the Scriptures alone. That is our standard of excellence, for the glory of God alone.

Those are the two motivations that are different than the person who can be excellent in the world. They can be excellent in the eyes of the world and achieve all those things. Yes. Will they have the true motivation that will begin a good work? No, it would be a good/bad work. The best that a non-believer can do is a good/bad work. Bad in the eyes of God, but good in the eyes of the world.

Remember, faith is this...just offered for your consideration: forsaking all, I trust Him. Forsaking all others, I trust Him. That takes us back to the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God; blessed are the poor in spirit." It is recognizing that I do not have the resources to become the adequate servant, but God has given me the resources because of the shed blood of Christ and I am going to trust that; because I know that God always leads in triumph.

Yes, Dale.

**DALE:** *Could I add the acrostic for grace...God's Riches at Christ's Expense.*

Amen! God's Riches at Christ's Expense...GRACE. Two things we need to understand. God's grace and God's faith.

Yes.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPANT:** *A lot of tendency, I think these days...which to use a technical term antinomian...[UNCLEAR] and this new language about Paul, they used things like the Spirit replaces the law. So you end up with...I guess some spontaneous work of the Spirit unrelated to any content. Where*

*in Paul would you say would be the best place to go to repute such [UNCLEAR], maybe Romans 8 might be a good place?*

I would say a series of Romans 5, 6, 7, and 8. Because it really deals with what it means to be in Christ and not in Adam any more. The degree to which you and I understand what it means...I've been delivered, I am no longer in Adam any more, and I am now in Christ...that is the key understanding of that. So I would say Romans 5 through 8.

Yes, Don.

**DON:** *How about Romans 3, verse 29, or 3, verse 30, I think it is; where it says, "Do we nullify the law by this state? No, rather we establish the law.[UNCLEAR]*

Romans. Romans 3, verse 20 through 29? Romans...something...{LAUGHTER}. Read the Book of Romans...{LAUGHTER}.

We don't abrogate or get rid of the law. We now have a disposition to want to obey it because of Christ's adequacy. There is a whole disposition and your desires change...that is what happens when He writes it into your heart. The law is written into our hearts, not on hearts of stone, but on hearts of human flesh and now your desires change. You want to be obedient and the desire changes; He gives you the adequacy to do that. That is why we walk by faith, forsaking all, I trust Him.

Let's pray. Father, we know that what we have talked about is not easy, and yet I guess you have designed it not to be easy so that we would not think that we can achieve it, but we have to receive it from you. Thank you, Father, for the difficulties that we have. Help us to understand that we will only have the peace of God when we have peace with God. And may we have the peace with you so that we become the one who is peaceful with you. Father, help us be all that you want us to be, so that we become the servants that you want us to be and to do. Father, we thank you that you alone are adequate because we know this: that you always, ALWAYS, always lead in triumphal procession. For Jesus' sake. Amen.