



The Sharon Star

The Calling of God

By A. Hinchliff

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In Revelation 17:14 we read, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are **called, and chosen, and faithful.**" This speaks of the battle that will take place at the end of this age between the Lord and the beast and his followers that are arrayed against Him. The Lord has many followers that are spoken of as being called, and chosen and faithful. This is the last great battle between the forces of evil and the Lord.

Being called, and chosen, and faithful are the three qualifications necessary for sonship.

There are many scriptures that speak of the calling of God. The Greek word that is translated called is "kletos" which means invited. Paul speaks of the Thessalonian church as being called or invited to partake of the glory of His kingdom. I Thessalonians 2:11 "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath **called** you unto his kingdom and glory."

Eph. 4:1-3 is an exhortation to walk worthy of that calling. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation where-with ye are **called**, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The call of God is unto holiness. I Thessalonians 4:7 "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

Our calling is because we have been "chosen;" to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. II Thessalonians 2:14 "Whereunto he **called** you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory

of our Lord Jesus Christ." What a hope. We are called to obtain and partake of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. II Thessalonians 2:15 "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."

I Peter 5:10 "But the God of all grace, who hath **called** us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." We have been called to His eternal glory, or as Phillips translates it, "to His eternal splendour." He warns us that there will be suffering. If not physical suffering we will suffer because we are troubled by the carnal nature. Look unto Him for His strengthening and settling power.

Paul, in I Corinthians 1:2, says, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, **called to be saints**, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." That is the calling of the church.

Then in I Corinthians 1:9, he says, "God is faithful, by whom ye were **called unto the fellowship of his Son** Jesus Christ our Lord. This is a tremendous and extraordinary calling. What a fellowship we are privileged to enter.

To help us understand how privileged we are Paul said this. I Corinthians 1:26 "For ye see your calling,

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brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are **called**: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

Another word describing those who are called is **chosen**. When a person responds to God’s call the relationship becomes closer and he is chosen. The word **chosen** is translated from the Greek word “eklektos” which means picked out, chosen or elect. In Matt. 20:16 and in Matt. 22:14 Jesus said that many are called but few are chosen. To be chosen requires a response on our part to the call of God.

Peter says to those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour; I Peter 2:9 “But ye are **chosen** generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” His words put the believer in Christ in a special category. I pray that God will help us to appreciate that.

Israel was a **chosen** nation which is still evidenced today after many thousand years. God spoke to Israel in Exodus 19:5 “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

We find later on that because of Israel’s sin and rebellion that God has in mind to destroy the whole nation. Exodus 32:9 “And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

This was Moses’ great opportunity, but rather than take advantage of it he interceded for the nation of Israel. Exodus 32:11 “And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which though hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent

of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

The following quotation describes the Spiritual state of the nation of Israel at the time. Psalms 106:19 “They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.”

Concerning the church (the word church means “called out ones”) Peter again says, I Peter 2:5 “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a **chosen** generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”

Ananias prophesied to Paul how God had chosen him. Acts 22:12 “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath **chosen** thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.”

John also describes those with the Lord as being **faithful**. The Greek word translated “faithful” indicates steady, strict and thorough in the performance of duty. Paul writing in I Cor. 4:1 & 2 says this. I Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found **faithful**.

Jesus tells in Matt. 25 of the man who was planning a long trip. He put his goods in the charge of his servants while he was away. Jesus told of how two of the servants doubled their masters money while he was gone but the third man dug a hole in the ground and buried the money he was responsible for. When the man returned he described the first two as **faithful** servants and promised them the privilege of entering the joy of their lord. The third, who buried the money in his charge, was called a wicked and slothful servant. The money was taken from him and given to one of the others. What Jesus said here is very true in Spiritual matters. Vs.29. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." We are responsible for, and it is very important that we enter into, what God has made real to us by the Holy Spirit or we will lose even what we already have. We must be faithful.

In speaking for his own ministry, Paul says in I Timothy 1:12-14 "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he **counted me faithful**, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." It is very important to our spiritual well being that we walk in such a way that God can call us faithful. Lord give us a faithful heart.

Christ is a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. Hebrews 2:14 "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is,

the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and **faithful high priest** in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of people."

I Thessalonians 5:23 "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

Christ was faithful in the appointment given Him of His Father. Hebrews 3:1 "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house." We pray that we may be faithful in the appointment given us of our heavenly Father, especially that given us by the laying on of hands and prophecy.

The elders of the churches must be **faithful** men as stated in I Tim. 3:1-7. Elders wives must also be faithful women. I Timothy 3:11 "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, **faithful** in all things." In fact all wives are expected of God to be faithful.

Let us hear the exhortation of John the apostle in Revelation 2:10 Fear non of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Praise God.

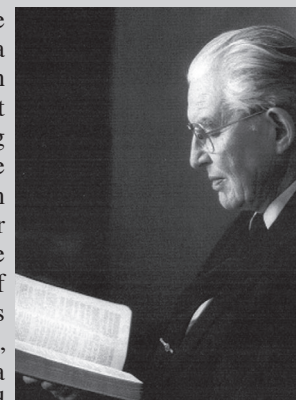
"Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of His saints."

Psalm 116:15

We bid farewell to our dear Bro. Allen Hinchliff on October 3, 2012, here in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. We cherish his valuable contributions as an author, bible teacher, and missionary. He seemed to have a special talent in presenting the most profound truths in simple enough terms for all to understand, by explaining scriptures with other scriptures. As it has been said, the bible speaks for itself in many ways. One couldn't help but feel like you have been fed a good spiritual meal by the time he finished his message, if one paid close attention.

I had the privilege of visiting many churches in North America as well as South Korea, The Philippines, India and Caribbean Islands with Bro. Hinchliff over the years. Needless to say we enjoyed each other's company and learned much from each other.

Allen and Edith spent quite a long time in South Korea one year, during which Edith managed a missionary guest house, and did a fine job keeping things running smoothly while Allen taught bible studies in various parts of Seoul. After which they returned home ministering in various parts of North America. As the years went by and their strength failed, they were both admitted to a seniors health care center and there spent their final years.



Bro. Allen Hinchliff

— Merv Smith

Sermon in a Nutshell

By David Luff

Recently I was reading from the Phillips translation of the New Testament in I Corinthians 16. When I came to verse 13 I noticed that the heading for that verse was “A little sermon in a nutshell.” That heading really caught my eye. Verse 13 reads as follows:

“Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, live like men, be strong! Let everything you do be done in love.”

If this is a sermon in a nutshell, then I assumed that there must be a lot of very important information packed into this short sentence. Therefore, I decided to dig into each phrase more carefully and see if we might discover the value in this “little sermon in a nutshell.”

Be on Your Guard: What does Paul mean by exhorting us to be on our guard? Let’s think first about what a guard does. A person who is a guard is posted to either keep certain people out, usually of a facility such as a bank, during the night or to keep people in, such as a prison. Guard rails are installed along dangerous sections of highways to help prevent automobiles from plunging off embankments if the driver loses control. Guards are important to protect us from a multitude of physical dangers. What about the spiritual dangers we face? The Scriptures have a lot to say about “spiritual” guards. Let’s look at just a few:

Guard Your Heart: Proverbs 4:23 (NIV, 1984) 23 “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” The word “key” could be substituted for “well-spring.” What does it mean to guard your heart? What is our heart? Obviously it is not referring to the organ that pumps blood through our body. It is the innermost part of our being, the seat of our emotions, our intellect, and the place where we process and evaluate thoughts. We speak of our heart as the place that Jesus comes to occupy when we are saved. It’s a very important place, and we must take care to guard it. Remember, one function of a guard is to keep dangerous things out. One area that is very important to guard is our thought life. Notice the importance Jeremiah placed on his thought life:

Jeremiah 12:3 (NIV1984)3 “Yet you know me, O Lord; you see me and test my thoughts about you. Drag them off like sheep to be butchered! Set them apart for the day of slaughter!” Paul’s sentiments stated in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 sound similar to Jeremiah’s.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV, 1984)3 “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power

to demolish strongholds.⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

One the hardest things for us to do is to take control of our thoughts. Without the help of the Holy Spirit it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. The best way to guard against ungodly thoughts is to fill our minds with godly thoughts. See what Jesus had to say about this:

Luke 11:24-26 (NIV, 1984)24 “When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’²⁵ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. ²⁶ Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”

After we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, it is important to saturate our minds with the truth of God as presented in the Scriptures and as Paul states in his letters to the Philippian and Roman churches.

Philippians 4:8 (NIV, 1984) 8 “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV, 1984) 12 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Guard Sound Doctrine and Instruction: Let’s look at some other things that Scripture exhorts us to guard. Remember, sometimes we guard to keep things from getting away. Sound doctrine is one of those things.

Titus 1:9 (KJV) 9 “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

To hold fast to something is to grip it tightly because of its great value.

Ephesians 4:14 (KJV)14 “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning

ning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

2 Peter 3:17 (NIV, 1984) 17 “Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position.”

It is very unsettling to not be sure of your spiritual doctrine, wandering from church to church, teacher to teacher, reading one book after another, trying to learn the truth. It is very comforting to me to be sure of the doctrine made real to us through the revelation of the Spirit. Everything we believe and stand on is firmly established in Scripture. We have a real sense of security knowing that our doctrine is sound and based on the truth of the Absolute. It makes doing the hard things not quite so hard when we know we are backed by the authority of the Word of God.

The Book of Proverbs has some important things to say to us about being on guard:

Proverbs 4:13 (NIV, 1984) 13 “Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life.”

Proverbs 4:10-15 The Message 10-15 “Dear friend, take my advice; it will add years to your life. I’m writing out clear directions to Wisdom Way, I’m drawing a map to Righteous Road. I don’t want you ending up in blind alleys, or wasting time making wrong turns. Hold tight to good advice; don’t relax your grip. Guard it well—your life is at stake! Don’t take Wicked Bypass; don’t so much as set foot on that road. Stay clear of it; give it a wide berth. Make a detour and be on your way.”

Saints, God has given us a wonderful order for the Church. It is even now the order of the kingdom of heaven for those who have the eyes to see. One day it will be the order of the visible kingdom of God on the earth. God has established the home where the husband and father will be the protective head in the type of Christ providing a safe and secure place for his wife and children to live, grow, and minister. He has set wives and mothers to administer households and to help their husbands instruct children in the ways of God so that that they may grow in favor with God and men. God has instructed children to obey their parents, to hold fast to their instruction. When fathers and mothers fulfill their God-given roles and children obey them, those children could not be happier or more secure.

God has established local assemblies made up of families and individuals under the headship of local elders aided and assisted by local deacons. Elders are not perfect men, but in plurality, God gives them wisdom far beyond what they have in the natural. It is sad that many who would greatly benefit from the advice and counsel of the local elders never go to them. Instead they do what seems right in their own eyes or talk to ungod-

ly friends and too often suffer negative consequences as a result. Remember the scripture above: “Hold tight to good advice; don’t relax your grip. Guard it well – your life is at stake” (Prov. 4:13).

Just as sadly, others do come for advice, but when they don’t like the advice they receive, they reject it and do what they want anyway also suffering the negative consequences of their lack of submission.

When we choose to walk in this way we must realize that it is not a “buffet” from which we can choose what we want to obey and leave what we want to ignore. The fullness of God’s blessing upon our lives and the church will not be realized when we act in this way.

Hebrews 13:17 (NIV, 1984) 17 “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

James 1:22-25 (NIV, 1984) 22” Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.”

Guard Your Lips: In the guarding of our words, we are again standing guard to keep certain things in check. In this case it is careless and hurtful words.

Proverbs 13:3 (NIV1984) 3 “He who guards his lips guards his life, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.”

The same scripture from The Message “3 Careful words make for a careful life; careless talk may ruin everything.”

The apostle James probably understood the challenge of controlling our lips and tongue better than anyone. Listen to what he recorded in James 3:2. “2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (KJV).

Of course, all of us have from time to time spoken unkind, thoughtless, hurtful, unfair, and even untruthful words. Hopefully, the Spirit of God convicts us, and we have sought forgiveness of God and of the people to whom we have spoken those words. Even though it should be one of our spiritual goals to become more perfect in our speech, we must realize that it begins in our hearts.

Matthew 12:34 (KJV) 34 “O generation of vipers,

how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

We can determine with all our natural might that we will control our words, but if the meditations of our heart are not right, eventually we will speak words that reflect what is truly in our heart. We must allow God to change our hearts. He does this as we read and meditate on His Word and pray. When we fail we must be quick to confess our sin to God and to the person to whom we have spoken amiss. Following this process can become a motivator for more careful speech. It is also generally good advice to speak less and listen more.

James 1:19 (KJV) 19” Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

Guard What God Has Entrusted to Us: 1 Timothy 6:20 (NIV1984) 20” Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge.”

2 Timothy 1:14 (NIV1984) 14 “Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.”

When Jesus saves us, fills us with His Spirit, gifts us with spirituals, and assigns us with the responsibility of a ministry, he expects us to be on guard to minister value to the Body of Christ. We can no longer be transparent spectators in the church. We must actively take our place and fulfill the responsibility of ministry entrusted to us by God. We will be held accountable by God for doing so.

Stand Firm: The second phrase in the “Little Sermon in a Nutshell” instructs us to “stand firm in the faith.” First of all, we must have a firm place to stand. God has provided that for us through the salvation made available to us through Christ Jesus.

Psalms 40:2 (NIV1984) 2 “He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.”

This scripture speaks to us of the wonderful salvation provided by the sacrifice of Christ. Our salvation provides the foundation for our firm standing. It is where our Christian journey starts.

I think of the words of the hymn *The Solid Rock* by Keith Ward,

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

Proverbs 12:7 (NIV1984)7 “Wicked men are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous stands firm.”

When we believe what God says and put His words into practice in our lives, we build a life that stands firm.

Matthew 7:24-27 (KJV) 24 “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

Note these additional scriptures which exhort us to stand firm:

Matthew 10:22 (NIV1984) 22 “All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV1984) 58 “Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.”

Ephesians 6:13-17 (NIV1984) 13 “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

If we look carefully into this passage of scripture, we see that standing firm really means standing on and abiding in Christ. Let's take each phrase one at a time:

“the belt of truth” John 14:6 (KJV) 6 “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

“the breastplate of righteousness” Philippians 3:9 (KJV) 9 “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

“feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace” Ephesians 2:14 (KJV) 14 “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.”

“shield of faith” Galatians 2:20 (KJV) 20 “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

“helmet of salvation” Romans 10:9 (KJV) 9 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

“sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God” John 1:1 (KJV) 1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

We can see from these scriptures that the full armor of God really describes Christ Himself. Therefore, we are instructed to actually “put on Christ” and stand firm in our faith in Him.

Romans 13:14 (KJV) 14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Galatians 3:27 (KJV) 27 “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

This is no time for us to get weak-kneed. This is a critical time in history.

James 5:8 (NIV1984) 8 “You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near.”

Live Like Men, Be Strong: The apostle Paul probably meant this scripture to apply to women as well as men. However, I think it is very important that men step up and be strong as heads in their homes and as godly examples in their churches and work places. The strength of which Paul is speaking is far from what our modern culture tries to portray. Godly strength involves sacrifice. It involves setting aside our own desires and doing what is best for our wives and children even when it is inconvenient and perhaps even painful. It is a sad thing to see husbands and wives quarreling and fighting, each demanding their own way and going their own way while innocent children look on in fear and insecurity. I realize that marriages go through rough patches, and sometimes things can appear hopeless. If people are willing, with the help of God, any marriage can be saved. As I mentioned earlier in the article, too often people do not seek out the counsel of the elders in the early stages of the problem or choose not to take the advice offered. Homes and families are severely damaged or even destroyed. This should not be. “What God has joined together let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6, KJV).

1 Kings 2:1-3 (NIV1984) “When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. 2 ‘I am about to go the way of all the earth,’ he said. ‘So be strong, show yourself a man, 3 and observe what the

Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.”

I think it is interesting to note that David exhorted his son, Solomon, to be strong, be a man. What does manliness and strength involve? It involves observing what the Lord our God requires; walking in His ways, and keeping His decrees and commands, His laws and requirements. Of course I’m not speaking of legalism but rather fulfilling the law of Christ, living by His mighty power and in the grace that is in Christ.

Galatians 6:2 (KJV) 2 “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Ephesians 6:10 (KJV) 10 “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

2 Timothy 2:1 (NIV, 1984) “You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

Let Everything Be Done in Love: Any good sermon ends with an emphasis on love as does Paul’s sermon in a nutshell because love covers everything. Note the words of Jesus:

Matthew 22:36-40 (NIV1984)36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

What is the nature of godly love? 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a (NKJV) 4 “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.8 Love never fails.”

This kind of love is not easy. Only by abiding in Christ can this kind of sacrificial love be developed in our hearts. Love is the key attribute of the fruit of the Spirit. Spiritual fruit, just like natural fruit, cannot be manufactured by human effort. It must be grown from a branch that is attached to a vine or a tree trunk that in turn is attached to a root.

Fruit develops as the branch stays attached to the vine. Life-giving sap flows up from the root system, into the tree trunk or vine, through the branch and finally into the developing fruit. Spiritual fruit may be imitated for a time, but never duplicated. It is wholly of the Spirit of Christ. If we desire real spiritual fruit to be borne in our lives, we must concentrate not on fruit but on abiding, abiding in Christ. What does it mean to abide in

Christ? I'm sure much could be said in answer to that question. However, I read a devotional the other morning taken from the writings of Hannah Whitehall Smith. She writes and I quote:

"I used to think there was some mystery about abiding in Christ, but I see now that abiding only means trusting Him fully. When we understand this, it becomes the simplest matter in the world. If my trust in the fortress of the Lord is absolute, I am abiding in that fortress. The practical thing to do since God is our Fortress and our High Tower is to surrender by faith to put ourselves and all our interests into this divine dwelling place. Then we must dismiss all care and anxiety from our minds. Since the Lord is our dwelling place, nothing can possibly come to any harm that is committed to His care. As long as we believe this, our affairs remain in His hands. The moment we begin to doubt, we take our affairs into our own hands, and they are no longer in the divine fortress. Things cannot be in two places at once. If they are in our own care, they cannot be in God's care. And if they are in God's care, they cannot be in our own..... Either trust the Lord completely or else trust yourself completely; but do not try to mix the two trusts, for they will not mix" (Taken from His Victorious Indwelling entry for September 24).

Regular prayer and Bible study will help us to put this complete trust in God into practice. As we abide in Christ, the fruitful attribute of love as well as the other attributes of the fruit of the Spirit will develop.

I close with the following scripture: 1 John 4:16-21 (NKJV) 16 "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love

Him[a] because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can[b] he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

One final thought; learning to be loving after the example of Christ both in word and action will not be accomplished overnight. We will make mistakes along the way, probably more than a few. When we fail, let us be quick to humble ourselves before God and the ones we have offended and seek forgiveness from both. The words "I'm sorry. Will you please forgive me?" should be well practiced in our conversation, especially with our spouses and children as well as friends and coworkers.

May this "little sermon in a nutshell" inspire us to be on guard, stand firm in the faith, be strong men and women, and to make doing everything in love our goal.



CALLED HOME

Patricia Stanley
Cranbrook, BC - July 21, 2012

Vern Delaronde
Prince Albert, SK - March 19, 2012

Allen Hinchliff
North Battleford, SK - Sept. 29, 2012

Zelma Wanagas
Edmonton, AB - October 26, 2012

*For a listing of dates and contact information
visit www.globalmissionsinc.org*

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