

## PREMINENCE

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If you have your Bibles, you might want to open up to Colossians. The Lord spoke a word to me this morning. I like the book of Colossians because Paul gives such preeminence to God. He gives such preeminence to Jesus Christ. I looked up the word preeminence because that was in the particular verse that God spoke to me this morning, and it was talking about Jesus Christ being the head of the church. It is in Colossians 1:18. I looked up that word, and as an adjective it means, "having the highest rank or outstanding." If you use it as a noun, it means, "the position of being first, as in rank, power, or influence." Preeminence. Preeminence. I even like the sound of the word.

There's a position, there is a place of recognition. The church is supposed to be the governing body in the world today. Did you know that? Now, I'm not talking about government in the aspect of or in the fashion of the political arena, but the church should be the governing factor that is moving in the land, as far as governments are concerned, because the Bible tells us that governments are established - how? By the will of God, that men rule by the will of God. Now, I know that might be a little difficult for us to understand with regard to some of the governments that we see, but the Bible says, nevertheless, that governments rise and fall by His instigation, His involvement. (Romans 13:1) Well, if God is involved in it, and we are the people of God, what does that say? It says that we, as a people of God, are to be involved in the aspect of what goes on as far as the land, the nations, and the people are concerned, but it doesn't seem like the church has that type of authority or that type of power. Why? Why isn't the church in that position? Why isn't the church in that place? I think you can start at the individual position or basis of inspection in order to find out why the church isn't in that place. If God isn't having preeminence within the land, it must be because God does not have preeminence in the individual entities of the people that are in the land. It must be that there is something that we hold, as a people, that is far more important than the thing that involves the governments of God. I don't know how you view the sons of God message of being a son of God, but it says that as sons of God, you and I are designed in the mind of God to rule and reign with Him. To me, that is the whole principle, the whole idea.

Turn with me over into 1 Peter 2:5. *Ye also, (you and I) 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 cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* Let us go down to verse 9. *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. A royal priesthood, an holy nation.* I believe that there is a scripture somewhere that talks about us being as kings and priests unto God. (Revelation 1:6, 5:10) There's a position and a place of

responsibility that you and I have for the things that go on in the environment in which God has placed us. Have you ever thought about that? How did you wind up in the place that you're in, doing the thing that you're doing? Have you ever really given it much thought? You know, most of us are in a particular job or occupation for what purpose? To make a living. Bring home the bread. Put the roof over the house. Put clothes on our bodies and food in our stomachs, right? You've got to pay the rent, pay the phone bill and pay the gas bill. Isn't that why you go to work? There is something that is out of sync with that type of thinking in the position of being kings and priests. Are you understanding what I'm saying? There is something that does not correlate. It does not come together in the attitude that we have with regards to the position of living if we are called to be kings and priests. Kings and priests means that you have a position of relationship that has a responsibility, that has the ability to overshadow. Overshadow. That means that there is a position of domination that you are required to have in that place of authority.

Go back with me into Genesis, please. We need to begin to exercise some of the authority that God has given us as Christians. We need to begin to exercise some of the authority that God has given us as kings and priests. Genesis 1:26, ***And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have ...*** What? Hello! What is 'dominion' to you? What does it mean? Does it mean to get your paycheck at the end of the month? Does it mean to have the word PAID stamped on your phone bill or your gas bill? Or does it mean that you make the payment on your house or car? Does it mean to make the installment on the loan to which you are indebted? Is that what it means to have dominion? Now, all of those things might be a fact of life, but in the midst of all of those circumstances, there should be an attitude that generates an energy that creates an ability to us to rise up over that set of circumstances, and in spite of that position of bondage or that position of necessity, there is still the ability that we have to function as kings and priests.

But the problem is that we don't function as kings and priests. We are brought into subjugation by the thing which we are to have an authority over. If that weren't enough, it was just our own inner personal environment. You can't rule out here, kings or nations or governments, unless you first can rule in here (over your own nature). It says, ***...have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*** Over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. That means even your own nature. Over your own nature. Over your own internal environment. Hello! Depression, frustration, anger, futilities, resentment, bitterness, argumentation, the power to provoke or anger. Come on, brethren!

So it says in verse 28, ***And God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,...*** Hello! Replenish the earth. It's in line with the objective that you and I have with regard to the position of being kings and priests, but we're so involved in the activity of our life, or we are so under the influence of our own personal environment that we don't spend much time thinking about replenishing the earth. If the truth of the matter were known, I think we spend more time just thinking or hoping that we can make it from today into tomorrow. Or maybe we don't think about it. Maybe we just drag ourselves from one point of the day unto the next point of the day,

doing the same thing that we did the day before and becoming more frustrated over the aspect of having to do it! Why? It's because we don't understand the position of relationship that God desires to have with the church and with humanity on a whole. It says He is the head. Isn't that what Colossians said? I would have liked to have traveled with Paul. In spite of the fact he didn't have airplanes, I would have liked to have traveled with Paul. That would have been just a tremendous experience.

Colossians 1:18, ***And he is the head of the Body, the church...*** I want to ask you a personal question. Is Christ your head? Is Christ your head? It says that He is the head of the Body, which is the church. Is Christ your head? Does He have preeminence in all of your affairs? If He came and told you that the thing that you're doing that you want to do (and you're doing it because you want to do it), not to do it, would you give Him preeminence? It's a valid question. It's a valid question! We want to know, "Where is the power? Where is the power? Where are the signs and the wonders? Where are they?" Well, they haven't changed. God hasn't changed. He hasn't changed from what He was yesterday. He's still the God of Paul. He's the God of Peter, the man that walked down the street and people would bring their sick out and perchance the shadow of the man would flow out and provide...why, why, why? Why? Why?! You know something, Peter came to grips with something that was within Peter, and he submitted it to Someone with greater authority. He submitted his life and his actions to that authority, and that authority began to move in the environment that we call "Peter." There are many things that we say about Peter, but very little is mentioned with regard to the position of power that the man had! Do you understand? Peter wasn't perfect, but in the measure that Peter had, he began to move in a manner and fashion to bring about the desired results that God wanted with regards to the environment that he himself was in!

It says that, ***he is the head of the body, the church.*** Is Christ your head? Is Christ your head? Is Christ running your bank account? Is Christ running your home, your business, your job? Now, you may be working for another employer but that has no business, nothing to do with your relationship with Christ. Christ should have preeminence in that type of an environment. You're not down there just to draw a check. You're not down there just to do a job. You're not down there just to make a living, just so that you can live and can eat, that you can drive a car or have clothes. You're down there as an emissary of the kingdom of God. You're down there as a protege of Christ! Do you hear me? Being trained to rule and to reign. Are you ruling and reigning? Does He have that type of preeminence in your personal affairs? The things that you like to do and the things that you don't like to do: does He have preeminence over that aspect of your life? Do you have your life kind of planned out? Are you going to do this and you're going to do that and you're going to do that? Are these all things that you're somehow hoping that God is going to put His blessing upon? Do you know that this is the will of God and the thing that you are supposed to be doing? Is Christ your head? Is He your head? Is He your head? Is Christ your head? If He's not your head, then you're not in the church. Hello! You're not in the church. You're not in the church that Christ calls His Body. No matter how much they may preach Body, no matter how much it is Body oriented, it doesn't make any difference if they have four hundred elders that are over a congregation of thousands of people, it makes no difference. If Christ is not your head, then you are not part of the operation that God calls the Body.

There is a position of relationship that requires us to begin to submit ourselves to the will of God. Most of our trouble comes from resisting the will of God. Most of the difficulties that we have in life come from resisting the will of God. Not from submitting to the will of God. If you're submitting to the will of God, it doesn't mean that you're not going to have troubles. You are going to have troubles. But in the midst of the trouble, Paul said, "I am more than a conqueror." (Romans 8:37) I am more than a conqueror. There is an attitude arrangement that comes with regard to "he that is a son of God" and "he that is moving in the position of dominion and authority," and one who is just subjugated to Christianity. Most of the church is subjugated to Christianity on a "have to" basis. They feel caught between the rock and the hard place. Hello!?! They feel caught between the rock and the hard place like Jacob. Did you know that Jacob was between a rock and a hard place? He had Laban on one side, and Esau on the other. He couldn't go forward and he couldn't go back. Most of us are being constrained to go in a particular direction at a particular time because of the external pressures of our life and the things that have been happening. But there is coming a time when those external pressures will not be sufficient to constrain you, or to drive you, or to force you into a place where you obligate to submit yourself, subjugate yourself to Christianity. Did you know that? There is a time coming for every individual.

It's amazing that the older you get the harder it is for you to change. You become more solidified in certain habits and in certain attitudes and in certain ways. That's why the Bible talks about bearing the yoke while you're young. I have seen people who have, at a young age, begun to move in the things of God, begun to submit themselves to the dealings of God but as they began to move in to God and submit themselves, God began to get a little closer to home, closer inward. He began to work a little more with their heart and get into their soul, into their emotional realm, into the realm of their mind, the realm of the will, the realm of submission and all these things that Christianity talks about, and there are places that they do not want the Holy Ghost to come into. They rise up in rebellion and they say, "No, God, please! I don't want you to have that portion." Everything seems fine and dandy, hunky-dory for awhile, but there's one problem. They're getting older. They're getting older. The older they get, the more it seems their will begins to break down under the stress of obligation. Sometimes resentment begins to build up within the factor of the man's or the woman's soul over the fact that that position of subjugation to righteousness is by an obligatory position of responsibility. It's not enough. It is not enough. They turn. They turn. They begin to manifest certain attitudes. You hear words come out of their mouth that they never would have thought of speaking. Do you hear me? They will move in certain attitudes that you never thought that that person would ever move in. Why? It's because the change or the reality of the experience of Christ having preeminence in all things was not something that was a reality to them or a thing that they were allowing to work within the confines of their life while they were young. They become more crystallized, unbendable, more breakable, more fragile, more crackable. I think that a lot of these diseases that you find common in old people, like Alzheimers disease or senility are not diseases that are belonging to the church. Do you hear me? A Christian who grows old in the Lord (his body is becoming older, it's changing, it's going through a process of change, it's doing things that it has never done before, or it can't do things that it used to be able to do) but in the Lord there is a youth and a vitality that is coming into his spirit. There is an attitude that he has that

is entirely different that resists the thought or the intent of Alzheimers or senility. Senility is a spirit of rebellion. There may be other things that are working on the natural level that bring about this thing, but, I'm telling you, it's the fact of the matter of a man that has subjugated himself, not to God, but to the world of his environment. It's a man or a woman that has not been in the position of giving Christ the preeminence and the place that is His to take.

Let's go back up in that chapter of Colossians. Paul is talking to the Colossian church in verse 9, ***For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*** Why? Why is it necessary to have that type of relationship? Why? It's because you're being tutored to be a son of God. You're being nurtured for a position of dominion. The work of you and I as proteges, as Christians of God, is to be in the business of subduing something. What are we supposed to be subduing? One another? It seems like we work a lot on that. Of trying to bring you into subjugation to what I think is right or what you think is right, and the only thing that is right is "thus saith the Lord," those things that are out of the realm of the heavenlies. You know, there's a lot of good men who are involved in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I feel for a lot of these men. We go out to a lot of different places, and we begin to share this word of the kingdom, and we meet a lot of men who are pastors. They have a call of God on their life. The problem is that they have been swallowed up by a system and indoctrinated in such a fashion and in such a manner that has corrupted their thinking. They think that the only way that they can do things is by politics, and moving in a position of authority that is contrary to righteousness.

You know, when I first came into this word many years ago, they were talking about ruling and reigning with Christ. They were using the scripture that is found in Revelation when it talks about that God would rule the nations with a rod of iron. (Revelation 2:27,12:5,19:15) I used to think, "Man, just give me that iron and we'll walk around and all those that resist, we'll just bash them over the head, bash them over the head with that rod of iron." Oh, yes, oh, yes. Now, if you don't think that way, praise God! You don't have to overcome that aspect of humanity. But the fact of the matter is, that was the perception which we had as a fellowship. I'm not talking about just the fellowship in which I was fellowshiping but the fellowship universal. There was a position or a place that we thought we could just take the rod of iron and use it like a club! Until one day, I had a dream and in the dream I was laying upon a couch and here was this rod of iron, but there was a space between my hand and it, which means that I had no control over what the rod of iron was supposed to do. The only position and the only place that I had was one that was at rest. Do you hear me? I was to be in a position of 'at rest' in the Lord. What does it say? ***There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*** (Hebrews 4:9) It talks about the Sabbath day in the natural not being the fullness or the fulfillment of the rest that was the intention of God's mind when He set forth the regulation, "Thou shalt keep the Sabbath day holy." (Exodus 20:8) Hallelujah! We know that the rest of God is coming in and moving and abiding in that position of Holy Ghost! I have nothing to do with it. I have absolutely nothing to do with it. I am supposed to be an instrument which God comes into, moves in and around, speaks through, does through, and when He's through speaking and through moving, I lay back

down. I have nothing to say. I have nothing to do. It would be good if I could find that place where I don't have anything to do.

***That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*** (Colossians 1:10) Are we increasing in the knowledge of God? I don't mean what you know about God, although that has something to do with it. I mean, is your knowledge or your awareness of the reality of God expanding? Is it increasing? Are you more sure of God today than you were yesterday? Given the set of circumstances where the devil rises up to cause you to begin to doubt the faithfulness of God, would you be able to resist the devil in that position? Increasing in the knowledge of God. I don't think that we're increasing. I think that a lot of the church is marking time. Do you know what marking time is? You go absolutely nowhere. You spend a lot of effort and a lot of energy and you wear your shoes out, and you go nowhere. You cover no ground. It's just marking time. You just march in one spot. Tread, tread, tread. If you march long enough, you'll dig a hole, even. You just get deeper down in the dirt, deeper down in the dirt, deeper down in the dirt. Pretty soon you're in a hole and you say, "Oh, God! I'm in this hole!" But it's a hole that you dug by marking time! You're not going forward. Your knowledge is not increasing in God. It says, "Being fruitful in every good work." How many of you are working for God? You're working for yourselves. You're earning a living. You're raising your families. You might be a good citizen in your community. I don't know. But how many of you are working for God? Working! Working for God! Working for God! There's a work that God expects you to do whether you do it or not! And you're going to be held accountable. Hello! Working for God. Working for God. WORKING for God! We're working a lot for ourselves. We're like the people that Hosea talks about. How many of you have a large savings account? How many of you put your money in the bank? In that bag with holes in it? You put it in the bank and you go back to draw it out, and it's already gone because you've been writing checks all week. How many of you feel like you've got a bag with holes in it? Not enough money. Why? Why? Why? It's because we're not giving Him preeminence. We're not giving Him a position of authority. You're not doing what you're supposed to be doing. You're not working for God. I'm not talking about just the financial position of responsibility. Come on, give me a break! I'm talking about working for God. It says, that you be fruitful! Fruitful! Fruitful means an increase. Fruitful! Fruitful! How are you affecting your environment?

I went into a store this morning and I got myself a cup of tea. It was on our way down here. We come early to pray. I missed it. I had to repent. I had to repent. I missed it. I missed it. I missed it. I didn't even know that I'd missed it until I got in the car, you understand. And then it hit me! I missed it! I went up to the counter and I said to the man (you know how we just kind of pass the time of day with the clerk), "How are you today?" He said, "I'm fine, if I can just get over this cold." And then he began to talk about his cold, and he said, "Well, I guess the only thing that you can really do is to take Vitamin C and get plenty of rest." And I said, "Well, I guess that's true." Turned around, paid for my tea, walked out to the car, and when I got into the car, the Lord spoke to me. He said, "You blew it! You blew it! You could have said, 'Have somebody pray for you. I have been a witness of individuals that have been prayed for and have received a healing in their bodies. God can heal you! Would you like me to pray for you?'"

What!? Right there in the store!? Right there at the counter and there was a person behind me? My goodness! I have a position of responsibility! He says that I am to replenish the earth! There's a replenishing that I could have done to that man's earth! Do you hear me? I don't know if the blood will be there, do you know what I mean? I don't know but I pray that God will give me another opportunity and that I will not be so slow or dim-witted or so overshadowed with my environment that I am not conscious of the voice of God that is talking to my ears!

You know, we've had two people get saved within the last two months, maybe. I wonder if anyone has talked to them about that salvation experience. I wonder if anyone has talked to them about the possibility of them wanting to be baptized. Has anyone given it any thought as to whether they need some sort of instruction with regard to living as a Christian? Or did we just say, "Well, they're saved. That's enough. Let's just send them on their way." I don't see either of them here this morning. I wonder what happened to them. Anybody check on them? "Are you coming to service on Sunday?" I think we have a responsibility. I don't think we're living up to the position of expectation, brethren.

That you be fruitful in every good work. (Colossians 1:10) Fruitful. Fruitful. Are you going to school? How is your testimony with the students that you sit next to? What is it that you're saying to them about their soul? What are you doing with regards to their position of captivity? Are you replenishing? Are you being fruitful in the works of righteousness in regard to their situation? What about your neighbor? Do you know anything about him? Do you know if they go to church? Do you know if they need Jesus? What do you know? Be fruitful! Be fruitful! Look around! Do we look too fruitful? Why? Why? Why? Most of it is because we're so involved with our own personal involvement. Most of our environment is pressing us, pressing us. We are subjugated to the fits of humanity that come with regard to our personal position of living. Why!? Why? It's because we don't have a reality or a knowledge of the position of the relationship or expectation. It says, ***being fruitful in every good work*** and it takes the fruitfulness of good works to bring forth the increasing in the knowledge of God. It's just like a tree that produces an apple. Do you hear me? There's a process that the apple goes through to come to the place where it's ready to pick and ready to eat. Think about that. The more fruitful you become, the more edible you should be. It says to present your bodies as living sacrifices. (Romans 12:1) How many of you are in situations where some demand was being made upon you that you personally did not necessarily want to submit to? What was your reaction? What was your position of relationship with that type of circumstance? Did you become edible or did you resist being picked and bit?

***Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*** (Colossians 1: 11) We want to have the glory. We want to have the might. We want to have the recognition. We want to have the effervescence, the bubbles. We want the power! We want the position of prestige, of what it means to be really spiritual! The problem is that a lot of us talk more with our mouths than with our lives. Are you there? Are you getting mad at me? More of us talk with our mouths than we talk with our lives! Our lives should be testifying to the power of resurrection! Our lives should be testifying to the power of resurrection! It says we are to be, ***Strengthened with all might, according to...*** Not your power. Not your

situation. Not your financial prosperity. Not your position of strength or know-how. Not your mechanical ability to perform or function in a particular set of circumstances. That has nothing to do with it. Do you hear me? Sister read a verse here the other night, The meek shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5) That means that if you don't have the spirit of meekness, you have no inheritance. If you're not having the spirit or the quality or the character of meekness worked within the fabric of your character (if you're always wanting to blow your own horn and to testify of your own testimony of the position or the place of your excellence of knowledge, your excellence of strength, your excellence of witnessing, your ability not to let the other person get the upper hand over you), you have no inheritance. You have no inheritance. It says that the meek shall inherit the earth. Hallelujah! ***Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power...*** Whose glorious power? Whose power? What glorious power? What is he talking about? What is he talking about? Be strengthened.

Turn with me over into John. Let's read at the first chapter, first verse, ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*** Do you understand the relationship? God is preeminent. God is exalted. God is in that position of overshadowing. God is in everything. Without God there is nothing! Nothing, nothing, nothing! If there were no God, you wouldn't have the chair that you're sitting on! Without God, you wouldn't have the life within you to sit upon the chair that you wouldn't have! God is in everything! It says that if it were necessary, the rocks...you know that when they make cement they put rocks in the cement? It means that if no one here wanted to praise God, God could speak to the rocks that are in the cement and they would praise His name! (Luke 19:40) They would praise His name! Verse 2 and 3, ***The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him...*** That that is why the rocks can praise Him. Did you know it? Because in them is a piece of God! That's why the Bible talks about the trees clapping their hands. Do you know that God designed nature in such a manner and in such a way that it exemplifies the praise and the worship that it has for an Almighty Creator, a Creator that would create and breathe upon dirt to bring forth beauty?

It says that all creation groaneth and travaileth. (Romans 8:22) Brethren, how much groaning, how much travailing, how much laboring in the Spirit are we laboring for a liberation? I would think that we might have to stand at the end of time, giving account for the fact that the grass out there was in a position of travail a lot longer and a lot more fervently than my flesh! It says ALL creation groaneth and travaileth. It says without Him, nothing was made. Hello! Nothing was made without Him. Now, how did He make something out of nothing? How did He do it? He just reached into Himself, pulled out something, and He put it down and it did just exactly what He told it to do. When He said, "You grow as a tree," it grew as a tree. When He said, "You grow as a bush," it grew as a bush. He said, "You are a rock," and it became a rock. When He said, "You are a bird," it became a bird. When He said, "You are a lion," it became a lion. When He said, "You are an elephant," it became an elephant. No matter what it was, it says ALL THINGS were made by Him. We don't know that. We don't know that or we do not recognize that position. The Bible says that we are to bring those things into subjection, not for the purpose of ruling them and commanding them, but that they might be liberated.

***All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*** (John 1:3) Not any thing. Not one little thing. Not one little speck of dirt. Not one little speck of dust. Not one little piece of anything was not made without Him! How did He make it? He took it out of His own bosom! So much for the Big Bang, or whatever they call it. Verse 4, ***In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*** We're talking about glory. We're talking about the effervescence, the shekinah glory, the reality, the magnitude, the magnificence of God Himself! We don't have words in the English language that can describe the excellence of His glory! We don't know about it!

***And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.*** (John 1:5-8) You and I are supposed to be like John! Do you hear me? We are supposed to be witnesses unto the Light. What light? The Light that was in the beginning with God, that God said was the Word and the Word was in God and God was the Word and in Him was all life. Without Him nothing was made! Hello. John was sent to bear witness of the light. You and I are being sent. We are being commissioned! Verse 9, ***That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him,*** (you and I were made by Him) ***and the world knew him not.*** I suppose that many of us think that what Peter did was a very despicable thing, a very bad thing, but you know, we have so many times and so many opportunities, like the opportunity today before I came to service. The fact that I did not speak to the man was not a conscious, deliberate effort to not speak, it was that my consciousness of Him was at a lull. It was at a low ebb. I need more of a reality of Him so that I do not deny Him! It's a denying not to speak of the God who created me. It's a denying of Him not to be a testimony and a witness to the life that is within me! It's a denial of Him! We are guilty, we are guilty, we are guilty. Guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty. Guilty of the same act of defiance or cowardliness or timidity (I don't care what it is!). I don't know. I do know. We're more conscious of the ramifications of testifying to the power of God to those that are around us than we are of the ramifications of NOT doing it.

Sometimes we're intimidated by the fear of emotional ostracizing. Do you hear me? Emotional ostracizing. That means when those in your family persecute you and they set you aside as some lunatic or some fanatic because all that you're ever talking about is God. And that you won't participate or do certain things with them in certain activities because it's not righteousness and it does not bring life, it does not bring a testimony of the power of resurrection of Jesus Christ within the midst of that environment. Sad to say, most of us submit and we allow...we allow, allow, ALLOW the works of unrighteousness to move within our own personal environment because we're afraid of emotional criticism or emotional ostracizing. We need to testify to the power of the risen Lord! We need to testify to the power of the Holy Ghost which energizes you to move in the realm of the heavenlies! We need to be a testimony of the life that God said He sent John. Who's He going to send in this hour? John is long gone. He's dead. He's gone on. He's over there in that heavenly host and company of people. Who is He going to send in this hour? Has His plan changed? Has John walked through the length and the breadth of this land? Has he testified to the Saducees and the Pharisees? "You

generation of liars! Hypocrites! What are you doing, coming down here to get baptized?"

Verse 10, ***He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*** The world that you're living in, does it know Him? The environment in which you find yourself planted, does it know Him? Do they know Him? Do they know that they are living by the grace and the mercy of God? Do they know that the breath that they are drawing has been a Divine gift that has been given unto them? Do they know that there is a calling and an election upon their lives? How about yours? Verse 11, ***He came unto His own, and his own received him not.*** I do not think this verse is pertinent to just the house of natural Israel. I think this verse is pertinent to what we call "the come-outers," the end time Body of people, the sons of God. ***He came unto his own.*** Who was His own? Did He not call Israel His son? Did He not call Israel, "You are my son whom I have brought up out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage"? What was He talking about? He was talking about the church. He's coming. He said that He has come unto His own. How is He coming in your set of circumstances? How is He manifesting? He is coming, you know. I'm not talking about His "coming" coming. There's a coming before the coming! He comes daily! He gives you and I opportunities daily to manifest and to walk in to your personal business. What are you doing with your time? How productive are you in the things that pertain to righteousness?

Now, remember that we started talking over here about the glory. Colossians 1:11 said, ***Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power,*** Back in John 1:12, ***But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become...*** You aren't just a son by becoming a Christian, being saved, or being filled with the Holy Ghost. The job has only just started. He has got His proverbial foot in the door. That's all! The rest is up to you! To become something, you have to work at it. You have to labor at it. You have to get involved with it. You have to do what you're doing and not do it unto a man, but do it unto the Lord, because as a prospective son of God, He creates an environment and He sticks you in it. He says that to them that receive him, to them gave He the power. Power. It's like *dunamis*, dynamite. Power. Colossians says that we should be, ***Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.***

***"...power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*** (John 1:12 and 13) Brethren, we need to be strengthened unto all patience. How many of you like to wait? I don't like waiting. Just ask my wife. I don't like waiting. I don't like waiting, but it seems as though waiting is one of the major positions of existence. But it's not passive. You don't just sit down there, fold your hands, twiddle your thumbs, look around and try to find something that you can focus your eyes on so that you might not be so bored as you wait, or so troubled. It's occupying. Hello! Occupying. You begin to look around within the environment of your soul, the environment of your home, the environment of your community, and begin to see what you can do to make the coming of Jesus more pleasant, more visible, more effective. Waiting is not passive. "Oh, I'm waiting on the Lord. I'm just waiting here, listening, waiting for God to speak. I'm just waiting that I might know the will of the Lord." The Word says that you and I are to occupy. The scripture is, until He comes. (Luke 19:13) We're to occupy. Occupy what? What are we supposed to occupy? We're to occupy

our soul, occupy our environment, occupy the land where we are planted or where God has put us. We're to do, and to do, and to do, until God says to do something else.

***Strengthened with all might, ...power, ...patience and longsuffering...*** It's not enough just to have patience. It's not enough just to longsuffer, although we would like the verse just to end right there. We could take our little white-out and mark out the rest of that verse. It wouldn't work, though. It would still be in the mind of God. He says that we are to be patient and longsuffering with joyfulness. What does Peter say? ***Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice...*** (1 Peter 4:12 and 13a) How much rejoicing have you been doing IN your tribulation? Have you been rejoicing against your tribulation? 1 Peter 4:13, ***But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings...*** You thought you were suffering on your own! "Well, God, look at me! I don't like having to go through this! What about them, God? What about them, God? They're not going through this! What about them? Can't you do something about them? Why are you giving it all to me?" It makes no difference what they're going through! If you're suffering, and you're called to be a son of God, ***...inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*** Hallelujah! ***Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power...*** Come on, brethren! 1 Peter 4:14a, ***If ye be reproached for the 'nature' of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory...*** Do you want to know what glory is? Get tribulated! Do you want to know what glory is? Get tribulated! Find some tribulation! Pray for tribulation!

There was a sister in Nigeria in a little place called Ikpe. You probably all know about her or have heard about her. She had her testimony in some of the articles that we have written over the periods of time. The woman started a little church out there that we were involved with and they persecuted her, ostracized her, and even tried to kill her with witchcraft. And when that didn't work, they sent someone with poison to try to kill her because of the testimony of the power of the glory of the resurrection that was coming out of her place of residence that she had turned over to the church. You think your home is hectic? Turn it into a church! People come, people go. It doesn't make any difference, people call you up in the middle of the night. They're in trouble and they're hurt and you can help them. They want help! You have to be instant in season and out of season. (II Timothy 4:2) Things cooled down. Things got a little calm. She said, "Oh, God! Have you left me? God, have you deserted me? Have you set me on the shelf? Give me more tribulation!" Would to God that we had a church (not one individual here or one individual there) that had the attitude like Peter had or like Paul had! He said to be exceedingly glad when you find yourself in the midst of multiple tribulation. "Only one at a time! God, I can only take them one at a time! Just give them to me one at a time. I don't want any more! I've got trouble with my kid! I've got trouble with my husband! I've got trouble with my car! I've got trouble at my job! I can't handle it, God. Take it away! Let the heat off! I just want one at a time!" He said to be exceedingly glad! Why? Why, why, why, why? Why is it so difficult? It's because we don't understand. Our focus is not on being a son of God, not in the aspect of that He might be glorified and that He might have preeminence. He wants preeminence! He is GOD! He will have preeminence, whether we give Him preeminence or not! God is going to have preeminence. He is going to raise up a people who will be His people and He will be

their God. Whether we are in that company of people is dependent upon our reaction with regard to the circumstances and the calling and the election that God has put upon us.

1 Peter 4:14 and 15a, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer,...* Don't suffer as a heathen! Don't suffer as a sinner. Don't suffer as one that does not have the reality of Jesus Christ or of God the Father. But suffer instead as a Christian! Verse 16b and 17, *...let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?* Also verse 19, *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* Unto well doing? Doing what well? What are we well doing? Occupying our position, keeping our soul, that He ALONE might have preeminence.

Colossians 1:15 and 16a, *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created,* Why do you think he's repeated that so many times? Because there's a point, there's a place, there's a position of preeminence that He's trying to establish. Verses 16-23a, *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled,* (Continue in the faith: have some of us started?) Verse 23, *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.*

Brethren, we have a job to do. We have a position and a place. We have a calling and an election. We have something that needs to be done with regards to our position of Christianity. Let us not shirk from that position of responsibility. Let us not draw back. Let us not falter or cause ourselves to be sidetracked on some other track or path that will not bring to you or I that which will bring a sense of completeness and satisfaction. Let us work on giving Him preeminence in all things. Amen. Praise the Lord.