BEARING THE MARKS OF HIS DYING

 by

 J W LUMAN

It is a joy to share with you the Truth that is ever abounding in Christ,

and I trust ever abounding in us who are His very Body. I think there is

no greater joy in the hearts of those who are knowing Him, than the

sharing of Him one with another; whether our sharing is in speaking or in

listening. And believe me, it goes both ways. We must listen as much as

we speak. What tremendous fellowship there is in the Lord's Body who is

truly finding that fellowship in the knowing of Him!

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 4. We will be concerning ourselves with the

sufferings of Christ. More than that - the wounds of the Cross - bearing

evidence of His dying in the life which we are now living. The wounds of

the Cross - bearing the wounds of the Cross - bearing the evidence of HIS

DEATH. Not the evidence that He is dead, because He isn't dead, He's very

much alive, but of His death. Bearing the evidence of His death in the

life which we now live. A tremendous mystery is wrapped up in that - a

mystery that I am finding is unknown to most believers. Friends - it is

through His death that you and I are delivered from the power of

darkness! In the fulness of His Life we are translated into the Kingdom

of His dear Son - Colossians 1:13. Yes, but until there is a deliverance

there is no translation. In Romans 5:9, "...much more then, being now

justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." That

speaks of an ever ongoing process of His Life. But the thing that is ever

present and ever evident, that releases us into that ever ongoingness of

His Life, is being now justified by his blood. Verse 10 broadens upon it.

"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of

His Son..." His blood - His death inseparably linked together, synonymous

in these two verses. "...reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much

more, (yes, being justified) we shall be saved..." (and that has to do

with the fulness of salvation, and the fulness of growing up into Him).

But the whole point that we in our hearts and in our minds, seem to jump

over is the all consuming power of His death - in deliverance, in

justification and in reconciliation.

Dear friends, except you and I embrace Him in His death, as much as we do

in His Life, we know very little of His Life; we experience very little

of His Life, because it is the knowing Him in the fulness of His death

that releases our hearts, our souls, our inner man to know Him in the

fulness of His Life! As His Body in this earth, we are to bear the marks

of His dying, bear the evidence of His dying, and manifest the fulness of

His Life! We are to bear the marks of the Cross and manifest one to

another, and to the earth, the fulness of His Life. But until we evidence

the marks of His death, we will not minister His Life. That's a

realization, and it first starts in you and I. You and I are the first

ones liberated by this tremendous truth, by this tremendous working in us

of His death. And I am finding to my great dismay, that most believers,

and I'm not trying to be ugly, even most ministry, has not yet embraced

Him, or been embraced by Him in the fulness of His death. They simply do

not bear the marks of His dying; in their every day life, in their every

day dealings, in their own thoughts and intents of their hearts, bear the

evidence of His death. And what that does is cause us to spend our time

striving to live like Him; struggling to be like Him. And there's just

simply no manifestation of His Life. There's just a struggle to try to be

good, to try to be like Him.

Dear friends, until we come to embrace Him in His death, there is no real

manifesting of His Life. Look at it in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have

this treasure (and undoubtedly this treasure is Christ in you, the hope

of eternal glory; the realization, the expectation of eternal glory) in

earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power (that is, the

manifested life of Christ) may be of God, and not of us." That is not of

our working, not of our trying and striving to be like Him. But rather of

our manifesting who He is, not something like Him, but who He is. " We

are troubled on every side, yet not distressed..." See, you have the

outside pressures versus the inside comprehension and peace and

realization. Most of us spend all of our life trying not to be troubled

on every side. Sweetheart, trouble is on every side. The whole

realization of Christ is on the inside and it is manifested in the midst

of trouble. " We are perplexed, but not in despair..." See, I don't mind

seeing believers troubled, but when I see believers distressed... I don't

mind seeing believers or ministry perplexed, but when I see them in

despair... "... persecuted, yet not forsaken." It isn't that much to be

persecuted. Paul says, "For the sufferings of this present time..." We're

going to be talking about the sufferings of Christ. But having Paul being

in the fellowship of the true sufferings of Christ, he is able to say

that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared

with the glory which shall be, and is being revealed in us - that inward

working of His Life. "...persecuted but never forsaken."

I don't mind if I see ministry persecuted; believers persecuted, but when

in their hearts they come to a point of desperation as though they are

forsaken, then something is wrong. There is a lack of true comprehension,

or a lack of the comprehension of The Truth in those cases. "... cast

down but not destroyed." Now here's why. "Always bearing about in the

body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be

made manifest in our body." That is, a physical manifestation of His

Life! A living of His Life goes along with a bearing of His dying. "For

we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the

life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then

death worketh (where? On us? No!) IN US, but life in you." See, it is

just that mystery that when we come, in an inward way, in a true inward

comprehension of our union with Him in His death, His Life is released in

us and through us to all who are around us!

Now, we're going to find in this search that the sufferings of Christ are

not the things which happen to us. Yes, Paul deals with things that

happen to him - sufferings of this present time, and other areas. But the

sufferings of Christ, the bearing, the evidencing of His death is what

you do in the midst of those things. It has nothing to do with those

things, whether they are good things, bad things, big things or little

things. The evidencing of His death is in the midst of those things - it

is not the enduring or suffering of those things, which we may well do.

But you see there's a lot of people who suffer, but do not in the midst

of it evidence His death. And there's a lot of sinners, and Christians

alike, who suffer things, who endure things, but in the midst of it have

no evidence of His death, and consequently, no manifesting of His Life.

So the sufferings of Christ are not the things that happen to us, or

rather we endure, but rather, the working in us of His death. And it is

that working in us of His death that liberates us from all things. Think

about this - ALL THINGS; things tangible, things intangible, things

physical, things psychological, things spiritual, things mental, things

soulish - all things. "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has

made you free. Be not entangled again with the yoke of (human) bondage."

His death working in us liberates us from all things, that in the midst

of all things, we may manifest His ever living; that we may manifest Him

who is ever living; that His Life, not mine, may be manifested. The

mystery of His death is the key to the releasing of His Life. And not

only to others, but within our own selves.

I'm finding that most Christians need ministry within, as much as anyone

needs ministry without. There is a great need for ministry of Life to be

released within. The healing - oh, the healing that needs to take place

within. The renewing that needs to take place within. The strengthening

that needs to take place within. See, we try to busy ourselves with being

"good little Christians", and we end up just being good little

hypocrites. Maybe not maliciously, but that's what it amounts to. And we

come to realize it from time to time and we get eaten up with remorse and

guilt, and hate, division and strife, and envy and jealousy and here it

goes. Because it just releases all of those qualities of the Adamic man

that we've curbed from time to time, but have never quite found liberty

from. I tell you, the liberty problem is in the comprehension of His

death. Because His death is a real thing, His death is as real as His

Life. But until we come to comprehend that... So, we're not trying to

make it up. No, we must come to truly believe; we must come to truly

embrace and comprehend in the inner man, the soul, that which is The

Truth. You don't try to make it true. We're not talking about mind over

matter. We're talking about the comprehending of Him in His death, and

the comprehending of Him in His Life! But, HE IS UNTO US BOTH DEATH

AND LIFE! As the old man, as the first creation, as that which is born

of woman - He is unto us death. That's the truth. He is unto us death, in

all of that realm and all of that creation.

I know that's hard for most to receive, because most have their life in

that realm and in that creation. I tell you that though that creation

speaks of Him and points to Him, that creation is not Him. I wish that

all those who get as occupied and wrapped up in the beauty of the first

creation would get themselves as occupied in the beauty of the second. I

wish that those that get involved in the things of the first creation

would get as involved in the second creation. The first creation and all

of its beauty and all of its stuff is simply set there pointing to a New

Creation in Christ Jesus. And the hope of the first creation is not you

and I getting involved in it. The hope and the only hope of the first

creation is that we be separated from it in death, finding ourselves

alive only in Christ, and ministering that Life back into the midst of

the first. That's the only hope for it. You and I can get involved in its

things, in its beauty, in its problems, we can get involved in its

campaigns. We can get involved in all of that and think we're going to

make a difference - and you are not going to. Because Christ settled all

of that at the cross. And though you and I may not come to comprehend

that Truth, we will never reverse that Truth. We will always just be

working against that Truth, and it's never going to produce anything

eternal. Now you can do that and you can die as confused and frustrated

as most Christians are now. You can die as mentally and spiritually

exhausted as most Christians are now - wondering why this and why that.

Or, we can allow the mystery of Christ to be revealed in us. We can

actually come to know Him in the death of the first, including ourselves

in that first - the death of me. But you see, when I die, I die to all

that is not Life. And there's only One who is Life, and that's Christ!

And I die to all else. I die to all of the first - I die to the good of

it, the bad of it, the beauty of it and the ugliness of it - I die to it.

That I might be found in Him, where there it is NOT I, BUT CHRIST who

liveth in me. Consequently I have a ministry now - out from the second,

out from the reality, into the first. Seeking to bring the first to find

also its fulfillment in His death and in His Life. We get into a realm

where only the Lord can direct us, don't we? We get into a realm where

only the Spirit of God can lead us. But I ask you to open yourself to

that, because otherwise the frustration of trying to make something work,

that you cannot make work, will simply consume you.

Alright. "So then death worketh in us, but life in you." I want to give

you some verses for your consideration in the days to come. 2 Corinthians

1:5, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation

also aboundeth by Christ." Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him, and

the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings,

being made conformable unto His death." Always His sufferings and His

death are synonymously connected one to the other, because I tell you

again, when we're dealing with the sufferings of Christ and the death of

Christ, we are not dealing with things that happen to us, or even to

things which we endure; we are dealing with the working in us of the

power of His death, and the releasing, consequently, in us and then

through us - the power of His Resurrection, the power of His Life! But

the one always must precede the other. It will not work any other way. It

is in His death you find your deliverance. It is in His death you find

your liberty, justification, reconciliation. It is in His Life that we

find fellowship and glory; that we find release of all that is Christ. In

His Life we come to realize a New Kingdom - the Kingdom of His Dear Son!

You see, we're always trying to find the one without the other - the

things of the Kingdom, the things of His Life, the releasing of His life,

and it just becomes an act of self effort on our part. Trying to live

Kingdom principles, trying to be like Him - trying, trying, trying. My

God, that's killing Christians individually and corporately, it's killing

fellowship among Christians, it is forbidding the advancement of the true

Kingdom of God in the earth - it is killing, killing. Lord help us! "...

being made conformable unto His death." 1 Peter 1:11, "... searching

what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did

signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the

glory that should follow." There's always a glory at the end of the

sufferings! Whether it is suffering for Him, or His sufferings working in

us - there is always a glory. The greater glory is as a result of His

sufferings working in us. But there is a glory always connected with the

sufferings, and it is always worked by the sufferings. Always, whether

the sufferings are without - trials, tribulations, or whether the

sufferings are the comprehension of His death within. It is this one that

we are talking about, because it is this suffering that liberates us into

the Life of Christ. You see, just the fact of suffering trials and

tribulations and wrong doings - those things in themselves will not

release you into the fulness of the Life of Christ. No, - there must be

that inward working of His death first! That will determine how you

handle the other; how you handle the trials, tribulations and good times.

It will determine whether in the midst of them you manifest self effort

or the Life of Christ - in peace, in liberty, in joy! It will determine

the difference, because you will do one or the other. As a Christian you

will do one or the other.

1 Peter 4:13, "But now rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's

sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also

with exceeding joy." Remember, this glory that is to be revealed, is to

be revealed in you. And it is the very full expression of Christ Himself!

That's the glory - Christ having His expression in a people. Not a people

trying to be like Him, but Him actually having His expression in a

people, and the transformation that has to take place is that

transformation worked in us by the comprehending of the Cross - of HIS

DEATH, of HIS SUFFERINGS. 1 Peter 1:5, " The elders which are among you

I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of

Christ, and also a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed." And

again, that glory that shall be revealed is to be revealed in you. It's

not talking about some future date, but an ongoing realization. John

20:25-28, "The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the

Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of

the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my

hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days (do see the

significance of this eight days) again his disciples were within, and

Thomas with them, then came JESUS..." Notice He is coming after eight

days here, so He is representing here a New Creation. He's representing

not only Himself resurrected, but a whole New Creation coming forth upon

the eighth day. That's what the eighth day stands for through the

scripture.

"Then came Jesus..." Oh my, who is it that comes in a New Creation? You

and I? No, JESUS COMES IN THE NEW CREATION! "...the doors being shut,

and stood in the midst and said, Peace be to you. Then saith He to

Thomas, Reach out thy finger and behold my hands, reach hither thy hand

and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing. Thomas

answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God." The whole story here is

just this - the greater evidence of the Resurrection is bearing the marks

of the death. Here He presents His Body in a spiritual way, because He

has come through the walls. He presents His Spiritual Body, yes, I know

it's visible, but His Spiritual Body is also visible by manifestation of

Himself. People may look at you and me and see white or black or brown or

whatever. But if we as His Body are manifesting Christ, they are not

seeing white, brown or black, but they are receiving a manifestation of

Him! Here He presents His Body as a Spiritual Body through which Jesus

comes forth in the New Creation. And what is it about that Body that

bears the evidence of His Life? It is the marks of His dying! You see,

to you and I these are not prints in our hands - they are not necessarily

what has happened to us; but what we as His Spiritual Body are bearing.

Now I know that there Thomas put his hand into Jesus' side, but you see

the greater truth was that was not a physical body, it was a Spiritual

Body appearing with the doors shut. And the true marks of His death were

not physical marks, but spiritual marks, that everyone of these men would

come to realize in a greater way in days to come, and what Paul realized

and presented to the Church.

We see a tremendous unfolding of the story here. Jesus isn't just trying

to convince one disciple, but setting forth a tremendous truth by which

His Body would manifest the fulness of His Life - shall evidence the

fulness of His Life in the midst of the earth. Bearing in His Body, which

Body we are; consequently then, you and I bearing - not necessarily marks

and scars. We're not talking about those. His Body bearing the evidence

of His death, that we may manifest the fulness of His Life! Give some

thought to that.

Then Galatians 6:17, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear

in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Galatians 2:20, "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." Galatians 3:1, " Oh, foolish

Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth,

before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified

among you..." Not that the Galatian Church was there on the actual day of

His crucifixion. No, Paul has set this truth forth in the midst of them,

bringing everything of the flesh and of the law, and all that is not

Christ to an end, that everything may be fulfilled in the Living Person

of Christ! He has set before them Jesus Christ crucified and living! But

what's the problem with the Galatians? Is their problem that they are

abounding in life and in joy? No, their problem is that they are in

bondage to flesh, wrapped up in self righteousness, full of schisms and

divisions, because they have left the truth of the Cross, and have sought

to find perfection in the flesh. This is the problem, and Paul hits the

problem right at the root of the thing.

"... Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth..." See,

you can't change the Truth, friends. You can either obey it or not obey

it. Dearly beloved, listen to me - you can't change the Truth! The Truth

comes right into the Person of Christ! HE IS THE TRUTH! And incorporated

with Him is His death, His Life, The Resurrection, The Glory. The

sufferings, the reality - all of it is incorporated in Him. These are not

things about Him. These are parts of Him; the experiencing of Him in the

reality of His death, His Life. You cannot change the Truth. You and I

can either obey it or disobey it, but you're not going to change it. You

and I don't create the Truth. The Truth is alive! The Truth is eternal!

Established in The Person of Him! We either come to embrace Him in the

fulness of The Truth, or we take something less and try to make

Christianity work. Please listen.

Philippians 3:7-11, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted

loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the

excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have

suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may

win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which

is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ..." Notice

the faith of Christ. It's the same faith mentioned in Galatians 2:20 -

"The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of Christ,"

directly connected to the realization 'Not I, but Christ who lives in

me.'

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the

fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; If by

any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." He isn't

talking about an event, he's talking about a realization and a

relationship. Philippians 3:13,14, "Brethren I count not myself to have

apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are

behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press

toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ

Jesus." Then Romans 8:17, " And if children, then heirs of God, and joint

heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him..." Again, this is

not sufferings for Him. "...suffer with him, that we may be also

glorified together (or glorified as one) with him." I want you to

contemplate these verses and allow the Lord to speak to your heart.

The verses I now want to exhort you on and share some along two or three

particular lines begin with Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ,

nevertheless I live, yet not I..." Do mark this, if not in the pages of

your Bible, then do mark this in your heart. YET NOT I. The first mark

of His death with which we will deal in this study is this mark - YET NOT

I. The true mark of the Cross is the absence of ourselves in all our

dealings and activities. We simply cannot deal with one another or the

world; we can only be dealt with, each of us, by the Cross. This releases

us to manifest His Life one to another. His Life - forgiveness; His Life

- reconciliation; His Life - peace; His Life - ministry of joy; His Life

- love; His Life - long suffering; HIS LIFE! We are never released to

minister His Life while we are trying to deal with one another. We cannot

deal with one another. Now I know that may be contrary to what Christians

counselors tell you and what most ministry will tell you. But you look

around and see if it's working; if it's ever worked. See if it's working

with you, in you. You and I both know it's not! You cannot replace The

Truth - we can either admit it or not; obey it or not; comprehend it or

not. But The Truth stands, and will always stand there. And there's no

other way to go than by Him Who is The Truth, The Way and The Life! No

other Way! We can not deal with one another. We can only individually be

dealt with by the Cross; dealt with by His death. Then we're released to

minister that which is truly Christ one to another, and to all the earth.

But it will not work any other way.

The first mark then of His death that we must bear is this realization

that is set forth here in Galatians 2:20, and Paul puts it here for a

very real reason. It is preceded by his statement in the first chapter of

Galatians. Remember we're reading a letter here to a Church, not verses

of scripture upon which the Church has based doctrines. The first part of

this letter is consumed with the realization of the indwelling Christ,

"God revealed His Son in me that I may preach him..." Yes, but what is

the realization by which all of this is released to the Galatian Church,

and released into the life of Paul? The realization "I am crucified with

Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, Christ liveth in me; and the life

which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God..."

That is, the comprehending of Christ in me. I live knowing it is not I,

but Christ. I live knowing it is NOT I, BUT CHRIST! Dear friends, I

point you to the fact that this is a tremendous knowing.

So, I want to share with you along this line. The first mark of His dying

is the realization - YET, NOT I! That's true, but not just that. The

only way you and I are going to realize that it is Not I, is to realize

that IT IS CHRIST! And the only way we can realize that it is Christ is

to embrace Him in His death. Now what I'm saying is that it is not that

"Not I", because many of us go around saying "Not I". Self denial, self

excuse, and in some cases even self justification. 'Oh well, I didn't do

that. I didn't say that. Well, I didn't mean that. Not me, not me, not

I.' See? 'That wasn't me, that was the devil.' Oh friends, "Not I" is not

a form of self denial. It is the realization that it is not I, BUT

CHRIST! You see, here's the mystery of the thing. Death is not one thing

and life another thing. Death is the same thing; life is the same thing -

IT IS CHRIST! It is just that Christ is death to the old and life to the

new! But it is the realization of Him wherein we realize, Not I. And it

is the realization of Him by which we realize - BUT CHRIST!

It is you and I having a heart for The Truth before God, rather than

justifying ourselves, rather than trying to find a way out, rather than

trying to find a reason for. There is no "reason for". There is no "way

out". There is just the reality of Christ and a New Creation in Him. But

the first thing He does is bring the first to an end. You don't have to

bring it to an end and then go find it. No - He brings it to an end. Your

whole search must just be to know Him; but it's got to be an honest

search; it's got to be a heart rending search. It has to be a search that

is birthed out of true godly contrition. It's got to be a search that is

birthed out of a heart that is truly sick and tired and fed up with

everything of the first. Because it doesn't make any difference how

beautiful it is - it's not beautiful enough, is it? It's not so beautiful

that man can't mar it, and the darkness can't hide it. No matter how bad

it is, it gets better. No matter how good it is, it gets worse. Oh

beloved Christians, quit trying to find your life and your happiness and

your peace and your forgiveness in the first. Find it in Christ and then

manifest it back to the first, that has none of that in itself and can

have none of it for itself.

Until you and I become those who evidence His death, bearing the marks of

His death, we will never manifest His Life! And the first mark of His

death which we bear is NOT I! It's not trying to keep yourself out of

things either. No, it is the abolishment of yourself. It is an inward

comprehending - Not I. Then it's gone. It doesn't make any difference

what then it is. It doesn't make any difference what comes up or what you

face - whether it's the past, the present, the future - it doesn't make

any difference, because it's NOT I! I have found my liberty! I have found

my way out, my escape from it - HIS DEATH - NOT I! There remaineth now

only Him, who liveth in me. He is my Life! He isn't there giving me life.

No - HE IS MY LIFE! He is remaining. My God, what a realization we are

released into! That realization is ever abounding, and the reason we can

not come to the mystery of it, and really once and for all and in fulness

bring into the earth a true manifestation of Christ, is that hardly any

of us have found the liberty yet of His death.

Don't get mad at me, but I hear bleeding hearts all the time wanting to

know why isn't He manifested in the earth more, why is the earth still

suffering this way - why this, why that? I'll tell you - it's because you

and I won't come to death. It's because the Christians, the believers,

those for whom He died will not embrace that death. You can sit around

and talk about it and blame God all you want to, and say how different it

ought to be. It isn't going to be different until we evidence His death,

which will release us to manifest His Life! The difference is in His Life

being made manifest. But that's only made manifest out from a people in

whom His death is working. And I tell you again - the first mark of that

dying is NOT I! Yes, we can take this extremely, or the Spirit of God

can take us extremely into it in a very deep fashion. I'd like for us to

come to it here, and face the reality, that we may be ever consumed in

the mystery of His death; and we may be ever involved in the releasing

and manifesting of His Life - both within and without. "Not I" means BUT

CHRIST! It doesn't mean I'm doing this, but it's really not me doing it

- No! "Not I" means "BUT CHRIST!" It is a realization that is worked in

you and I inwardly, definitely, in the comprehending of Him as our death.

Oh my, the liberty that we find there. "Not I" brings us over to the

statement of Paul which we read in Philippians Chapter 3 verse 7. "But

what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. And do

count them but dung that I may know Christ. That I may know him, and the

power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings..." What

things were gain to me. You see it's those things, beloved, that we try

to bring over and incorporate into "But Christ" and they just have no

place there. Because even the things that were gain to me, are still

connected with me, and it is NOT I, BUT CHRIST. You can't bring those

things over, you can't reckon the worse dead and keep the best. You see,

this is the sin and the idea that surrounds Saul. 'Well, we got rid of

the worst and we kept the best. Of course we're going to give the best

and dedicate the best to God.' And this is when the Lord told Samuel to

quit praying for Saul. 'I have rejected him from being King over my

people. I have counted him as though he never existed.' That's what the

word 'rejected' means there in 1 Samuel 16. I've kept the best. And the

Lord said 'destroy it all!' Well you see, His Son, brought forth in type

there in David, just as we in union with Christ as Son of Man are brought

forth in type in Solomon; His Son in type in David dealing with Israel in

the ways he did - well, he is obedient. And he destroys all. See, when

Christ came to the Cross, David is the type of all that coming to Mt.

Zion by way of blood. Yes, bringing a people victoriously into the full

thought of God, but by way of blood. And you see, Solomon had nothing to

do with the blood; the blood had already been taken care of. There is a

work of God, there is a salvation that we must come to realize in Christ

that is without sin. But let's set that aside. Because we must come by

way of the cross to it. And that death must ever; that death that is

against all that is not Christ must ever be working in us in order to

release all that is Christ!

When God's Son came to the Cross He didn't seek to save the best - HE

DESTROYED IT ALL! The Truth of Christ relating to death is that He

destroyed it all! The whole of the first creation, the whole of Adam.

Why? Because it all fell short of the glory of God; it all falls short of

the Person of Christ Himself. It all points to Him, but it is not Him. It

speaks of Him, but it is not Him. It all falls short of Him. And He

brought it all to an end - even the things that pointed to Him, not just

things that pointed away from Him. He brought them all to the Cross, and

in death fulfilled them; because in Life He far exceeds them; far exceeds

everything that even points to Him; far exceeds even the goodness of it -

HE FAR EXCEEDS IT! It is not comparable. He is much, much more. There is

no comparison really between the first and the second, because the first

is man, and the second is Christ! Friends, you and I have been brought by

Him, through death, into LIFE! But you can't discount the death and

expect to manifest the Life. All you'll do is manifest a self effort,

trying to produce the Life. You don't have to produce the life. HE IS

THE LIFE! All you and I must do is all we've ever had to do - come to

Him with an open heart, with a turned heart, with an honest heart. 'Oh

God, reveal your Son in me. Oh God, open my eyes that I may see.' That's

all it's ever been, friends. But there you see, we have to be honest

enough to say we're blind and that we need. Lord help us.

But I must tell you, the things that are gain are suffered loss. All

things. This is something the Lord has pressed on my heart, because I

tell you we can talk about the King and the Throne and the Kingdom; we

can talk about the reality of the Anointing, but all of this comes by the

inworking of His death! You can't say 'Yes, I'm dead with Him. Yes, I've

died. Yes, I'm crucified,' and not manifest the marks of His dying. You

can not manifest His Life without giving evidence inwardly, outwardly of

His death. And in so many there is great talk of His Life, great

preaching and teaching of His Life, but there is absence of the mark of

His death, the witness of His death. I don't mean the stench of death,

the smell of death - I'm talking about His death! I'm talking about

bearing the witness of His death. The witness of His death is that in me,

in you, it is NOT I. And that that's a realization, and that NOT I is

defined by BUT CHRIST. It's not defined by self denial, self pity - it's

defined by BUT CHRIST!

The second mark of His death - Philippians 3:13, and understand there are

many marks of His death. Those marks are as numerous as the ways in which

that death is evidenced in us. "Brethren, I count not myself to have

apprehended..." The word "apprehended" here means to comprehend. It's the

same word used when Paul says, "I would that you would comprehend with

all saints what is the length and depth..." How do we apprehend a thing

in Christ? By comprehension. What is comprehension? It is the Holy Spirit

revealing Christ in us; revealing, bringing us to know; it is the faith

of the Son of God by which we know. "...I count not myself to have

comprehended, but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are

behind..." What is the 'forgetting of those things which are behind"

except verse 14? "I press toward the mark..." See, you can't do one

without the other. You can't press toward the mark without forgetting the

things which are behind. You can't forget the things that are behind

unless you are pressing toward the mark. Those two things cannot be

separated any more than life and death, or death bringing forth life can

be separated. You can't make your whole life trying to forget the things

that are behind. No - how do you forget the things behind? By turning

from them, to press forward to the mark! Not to press forward to better

things or better days. "I press forward to the mark for the prize of the

high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Again, NOT I, BUT CHRIST! Occupied

with the "BUT CHRIST". Here forgetting things behind. How? I press

forward! The prize! The high calling of God in Christ Jesus! But the mark

remains to be that of forgetting the past.

Most believers are ever looking backwards rather than ever looking unto

Jesus. I think this is one of the things that grieves my heart most with

believers and ministry - they cannot forget the past; even if the past

were yesterday. Past is anything that is not looking forward unto Jesus.

So it involves a great deal, friends - good and bad, big and little, but

it is past nonetheless. You can't build on the past even if the past is

all good. You certainly can't even if it's all bad or a mixture of the

two. I'm telling you it will not work. "Looking unto Jesus the author and

the finisher of our faith." Ever looking forward. You've not been this

way before. Set the Ark out two thousand cubits. Why? Because you've not

been this way before. Now you are forgetting the past. Now Egypt is truly

sealed, now the wilderness wanderings which is not the same as Egypt, but

that too is forgotten. You've not gone this way before. Would you walk in

Him, friend? Would you know the fulness of His Life, Beloved? You can't

bring the past with you! Good, bad or indifferent. It has no place in the

ongoing, ever abounding revealing of the Son. You just can not do it.

I see Christians today and most all bear the marks of mistakes, bear the

marks of rebellion, bear the marks of hard times, bear the marks of sin;

things that happened to us and left emotional and physical scars. Bearing

those marks. But very few bearing the marks of the Cross, because you

see, it is the Cross that liberates us from all others. When Jesus

appeared in that room, and the full significance of that appearance - He

appeared there as His Spiritual Body. He appeared there as the eighth

day, the New Creation Man, made up of all believers in Christ Jesus, and

yet it is Jesus who comes in that Body - mistake it not. And that Body

bears what? It bears nothing but the mark of His dying! It doesn't bear

all the other scars. No, it bears the mark of His dying! And what is the

mark of His dying? It is the death of humanity. The only way you and I

are ever going to forget the past and let it be done away is when we bear

in us the mark of His dying, which is the death of humanity. But we don't

want to do that - we want our humanity understood. We want our humanity

dealt with. Well, it has been dealt with by the Cross! But we want to

deal with it on a lesser plane. We want our humanity justified. We want

our pound of flesh from each other.

I'm not talking about heathen savages, sinners; I'm talking about God's

children, ignorant of the Cross. You see there is no greater hate, no

greater danger, no greater evil than the flesh justified. I'd rather be

thrust into the hands of rank heathen than thrust into the hands of self

righteous Christians. A self righteous Christian is worse than one who is

not a Christian at all, because a self righteous Christian is Anti-Christ

- substituting ourselves for Him, our righteousness for His. The only

instrument that stands against and does away with the Anti-Christ, the

self righteous Christian is THE CROSS! The Cross is our deliverance,

friends. The Cross is our deliverance from things behind. "Forgetting

those things which are behind..." Now, Paul was talking about yesterday,

and his forgetting went all the way back to the time that he murdered

innocent men and women and boys and girls. And do you realize, that he

delivered Christians to the hands of the authorities who fed them alive

to lions? My God! Forgetting things that are behind! Not only things that

were gain to me, not only Pharisee of Pharisees, circumcised the eighth

day - No - murderer of Christians!

There were those in the Church of that day whose parents Paul helped

murder. Can you imagine this man coming declaring to you heavenly places,

declaring to you the reality of the Life of Christ, and you saw him drag

your parents off to be eaten by lions? I'm just getting real with you. We

like to read the scripture like it's some kind of a Mother Good rhyme,

and it is not. It is a testimony of Jesus Christ being worked out in and

lived through His Body, and all of these things are faced. And how can

they be faced? Certainly not in the benevolence of the human mind that

seeks only to justify itself. No, but in the realization of the Cross. Oh

yes, I believe fully that Paul embraced physical sufferings because of

the scars he had added to the Body of Christ. I believe he took pleasure

in necessities for the Lord's Body for the harm he had done to it. But

you see, all of that was only because there was a working in him of the

true sufferings of Christ. He could only minister Life. Paul didn't go

around ministering remorse to Christians whose families he had destroyed.

He ministered Life - the Life of Christ! And that's got to come out of

the realization of death.

Now I'm telling you that's the realization into which each of us must be

brought, and allow ourselves to be brought there by the Holy Spirit. To

where His death is real in us, working in us; so that we are not walking

around exhibiting the scars of mistakes and the scars of the past, and

the scars of sin or of hardship, and what others have done unto me -

manifesting those scars. Those are not the marks of the Cross. They are

the absolute opposite of it. Those are the marks of humanity; those are

the marks of sin. And I don't know that there's one individual who

doesn't bear some of them. I know we all want to say that ours are the

worse, but I doubt that they ever really are the worse. But even if they

were the worse, Christ CONSUMES THEM ALL! He bears all of those marks,

and brings them into one mark - the mark of the Cross. I think you and I

as Thomas need to examine His hands and His side and His feet, in a very

spiritual way - not in doubting the Resurrection, but that the true

witness of His Resurrection - NOT I, BUT CHRIST - be made real in us. We

need to allow the Holy Spirit to bring us to The Truth. We'll never be

released into the fulness of The Truth until we come to the very

foundation of it - THE CROSS! The Cross is indelibly; the Cross is

irresistibly and eternally planted in the very midst of the Kingdom of

God! It is out from the realization of the Lamb that is slain that the

power of God is released in the lives of believers and manifested in the

midst of the earth.

You and I can continue to bear the scars of our hurts and of our

successes; bear the scars of our mistakes, hard times, what have you. Or

we can come to embrace Him in The Truth that He is, and find Him as unto

all of that, find Him as our death - the death of ME! Because you see,

when I die, all of that passes out with it. And come forth not bearing

those scars, but bearing the one mark of the Cross - the mark which says,

NOT I; the mark which says "forgetting that which is behind"; the mark

that is fulfilled in Not I, BUT CHRIST! Forgetting the things which are

behind, I press forward to the mark.

And lastly just to mention the third mark - an all consuming mark, and a

mark which you need to give a great deal of thought to. The mark of His

death is found in the fellowship of His sufferings. Fellowship. We are

released by His death into the sweet fellowship of His Life, and that's

what most Christians and ministry are missing. The third mark, if I can

call it that, is the mark of fellowship. Not acquaintance, not friendship

after what we know that to be; not tolerance, not family. No -

fellowship. It goes beyond all barriers of humanity and is found only in

the realization of Christ. It is by this fellowship that we jointly,

unitedly, corporately bear the witness of His death, and manifest the

fulness of His Life.

May God bring you and I into such a fellowship with Him, so that same

fellowship may be shed abroad in us and manifested by us in the midst of

all the earth. May God lead us and guide us and direct us into the

fulness of that Truth which is Christ. Not having as its end result a

doctrinal teaching or the knowing of another new thing. No - having as

its end result you and I finding fellowship with Him and manifesting that

fellowship throughout the whole earth. That's what we are set here for.

"God is faithful who has called us into the fellowship of His dear Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord." May God bring us into the realization of Christ

through His death into the fulness of His Life. AMEN!