

The Sword and the Trowel

By Paris Reidhead*

Our theme this morning, The Sword and the Trowel. I shall begin reading with the 12th verse, and conclude with the 18th verse, in order to give background for the text.

Nehemiah 4:12 - 18:

¹²And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you. ¹³Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. ¹⁴And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. ¹⁵And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. ¹⁶And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. ¹⁷They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. ¹⁸For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

Last week, we saw that the work of securing a witness for God, whether it be the walls of Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, or the walls of any church testimony, or any Christian life eroded by the passing of time, always is hindered by Rubbish. It is therefore important that we should recognize that rubbish with all that we saw it to be is not the only problem that is confronted by that heart, or that company of people that would seek to have glory come to the Lord. There were enemies, those who were absolutely committed to the extinction of that which God sought from this little piece of real estate there, east of the Mediterranean, called Jerusalem, a little, inconsequential, insignificant city, that had no great value in and of itself, but the fact that God loved it. And God purposed to have there something wholly for Himself, made out of nothing, but nevertheless made according to His plan, and something because of what He had done to it. And so God, for a strange reason, loved this place called Jerusalem, the city of His dwelling, the place of His abiding, and He wanted to have a testimony there. He had, because of the sin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, destroyed it through the one whom He called "My servant, Nebuchadnezzar," testifying that God is too holy to make peace with sin, even when that sin is associated with something extremely dear to Himself (Jer. 27:6).

We have a tendency to protect ourselves, to protect our families, to protect those that are related to us by blood, protect our church. We have a tendency to overlook sin. But God is too holy to overlook it, and when His beloved Jerusalem sinned, God sent His servant, a pagan idolater to come and to make rubble out of the walls, and to destroy the city, until there was not stone left upon stone. That did not change His love. That did not change His purpose. All it did was to postpone it, and He waited until He could get a people whose hearts were right toward Him. Now, He has somehow touched this man, Nehemiah, and he has come back to bring a testimony in the same place.

This is what the Lord Jesus Christ has done with His church. He has said that His church should not be defeated. And He has sovereignly established the pattern. He did not say that churches would not, but He said that His church would be victor; "the gates of hell should not prevail against it" (Mat. 16:18b).

A trip through the Middle East is most illuminating, because it allows you (if you go as we did down into the heart of Africa, through Egypt) to discover that in the 6th, the 7th and the 8th centuries, Christianity had not only gone entirely along the northern part of Africa, and the southern shore of the Mediterranean, but it had penetrated as far as 200 miles south of Khartoum, or roughly 1600 miles south of Alexandria, Egypt. Way down in the heart of Africa were churches, but Christianity lost its saving power. It became un-salty, and our Lord said, "That the salt losing its savour, its saving power, is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under feet of men" (Mat. 5:13).

Now I say that for this reason, there is no amount of effort on the part of rebellious people to thwart the judgment of God. You will notice from the portion that I have read that Nehemiah instructed his servants, to those that served with him, to hold the spear in one hand and the trowel in the other. But Jeremiah had instructed his generation to throw down the spear, that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed and there was not a thing they could do about it. No amount of organization or effort, or prayer, or using of Scriptural truth is going to prevail, unless one is right with God, because it is not the truth, it is not the Scripture, it is not the principle. It is obedience and the blessing of God. And so, we found that those churches that were all across North Africa, from Gibraltar to the Suez, and from Egypt clear into the heart of the Sudan, were destroyed. The Mohammedan hordes that came across destroyed the churches, and killed the people. The only ones that survived in this holocaust were those that made some kind of settlement and adjustment with the invaders, the Coptic church of Egypt has survived and is Christian today, and incidentally Dr. Salaama who is with us frequently has been part of that group, and testifies, and I know from many others that a real revival is going on in that branch of the Coptic church in Egypt. We are acquainted with the fact that Ethiopia also has part of that ancient church that survived the holocaust of Islam that struck clear across North Africa.

And may I say this, without appearing to be too self-critical, that I believe that just as Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant to discipline Jerusalem for her sin, that Islam was God's servant to discipline Christianity for its powerlessness, its weakness, its impurity, and that there was no amount of use of truth, even the truth we are talking about today, that would have stood it. It required repentance. It required confession. It required obedience. It required turning to the Lord, and then no army can stand against the Lord. And so let us understand then that God is too holy to look upon sin, and no truth is ever to be thought of as that which is going to protect us from just judgment. There is only one way to deal with sin. That is to hate it, to forsake it, to confess it, to break with it and all who participate in it. And unless we do that, we can expect that inevitably history will repeat itself, as long as people think that they can somehow use the fact that they have the name of God as an excuse for continuing in that which God hates. It will not work.

There was the history of the walls turned to rubble, through which Nehemiah plowed in the effort to get something that would be a testimony, for we have seen the walls as obedience, we have seen the walls as faith, we have seen the walls as the protection God provides those that walk after His counsel. We have seen the walls as being the security that He gives to those who "walk in the light as He is in the light" (I Joh. 1:7). We have seen them as "the angel encamping about them that fear Him" (Psa. 34:7). We have seen the walls as the witness that God wants from His church today.

Now remember that in addition to that rubble and rubbish, and sin from which we came, and which we brought with us when we came into the church as we saw last Lord's Day, there were those who hated the testimony of Jerusalem, whose names have been given. Now I will immediately move from that, and say I consider that Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian are types of that of which we read in Ephesians 6: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, the rulers of darkness, and wicked spirits in high places" (Eph. 6:12). That Sanballat, and Tobiah, and these, this host of people, represent another alien government to Christ that was so... And I shall so treat all that we see, and want, by stating this, to have you follow with me the more clearly.

Now, let us look for just a moment at what the Scripture has to say concerning these who oppose the building of the wall. Remember their opposition was not sporadic. It was constant. Remember it was not just an impulse, but it was a preset course that they were determined to follow. In the 2nd chapter and the 9th verse, we find the first reference. Nehemiah has come "to the governors beyond the river, given them the king's letters...when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the slave, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel" (Neh. 2:9-10). They did not want Israel to prosper. They did not want the wall built. They did not want God's glory there. They had made adjustment. They had made conniving agreement, and secured profit from Israel and Jerusalem in shambles, and they did not want anyone to seek. What was that profit? Well, profit can be in many respects. Profit is something that one gains for himself. Many times it is money, but money has no value except in the things that it will buy, or the position that it affords, the pleasure that it gives. Profit has to do with that which one gets that he thinks is going to benefit him. It can be from the standpoint of status or position. It can be from the lust of the eyes, things. It can be from the lust of the flesh, experience.

But whatever it was, Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem and the others with them were opposed to the walls being built because they would lose something. They did not want it to happen. They were satisfied with the status quo.

Now, I submit to you that this is exactly the attitude of Satan. He does not want revival. He does not want the church purified. He does not want the glory of God. He is absolutely pleased with the status quo, if that is anything less than God's will and way. He is totally opposed to everything that will make the people of God blessable. And so he has been subtle. He found in the first century that he could not destroy the church by persecution, that is by causing some to die that others might fear. Now he is more successful.

For instance, in North Korea, we are told that over 400 thousand of the sweetest Christians that have walked on the face of the earth have been assassinated for no other crime than their love for Christ, and that during the last 12 years. He has not persecuted some to cause others to fear. He has exterminated, and by this means he has done really nothing more than to simply send home a whole crop of Christians that are prepared to be built into that invisible body that He is building there that is going to come down from heaven as a bride adorned for her Husband. This is one thing that makes me feel that the coming of our Lord is near, that He is reaping so many that have loved Him and trusted Him, and loved not their soul even unto death. But Satan is always opposed, totally and uncompromisingly opposed to the welfare of the people of God. When he found that he could not succeed by opposition and persecution, then he invaded. He drew in his philosophies as we saw last week, drew in all of these heathen ideas, brought them in carefully, smuggled them in, and they were built in as though they were part of our faith, and today in most of Christian life we cannot tell the difference between what is Biblical and what is heretical, it has just been made orthodox by the passing of the centuries. We are so much more ready to submit to tradition than we are to the Scripture.

If we were to take, perhaps ruthlessly as we ought to, and by God's grace may before He returns, the Word of God and test everything by the Word of God, there is precious little that we have that would survive. But it has been the subtle strategy of Satan to try to infiltrate, and bring and carry, and put in. And so he was utterly opposed. Now he has not changed; after all we still "wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers."

And then in the 19th verse of the 2nd chapter, we find another aspect of this opposition: "But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the slave, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us" (Neh. 2:19a). If I had the time I could ask the University students who are here to come to the platform, and they would testify, I believe almost without exception, that somewhere in their university career, in their state schools, they have been laughed to scorn, that if it hasn't been done outwardly, it has certainly been made abundantly clear by the insinuations of students and professor that anyone who would believe in the faith once delivered to the saints in the simplicity of the Gospel is intellectually so passé and behind the times that they are to be pitied rather than to be really fought. Laughed to scorn. And I would further suggest to you that when people start talking in sincerity about the great need of the church, they are laughed to scorn. I have been appalled, as I have heard some of our own pastors and students, when they have read editorials of Dr. Tozer's¹ in the Alliance Witness, whom I consider as eyes to the church in this hour of her blindness, have said, "Oh, that is just Dr. Tozer." I have found in my own case, he is an old tradition, and I am a young tradition, and occasionally people will say, "Oh, you have just been with Reidhead too long, or, that is just him. Just a young tradition." He is an old tradition, but dear heart, I submit to you. I submit to you that it is still possible for the deepest work of the Spirit of God to be killed by this subtle attempt. Nothing but a raised lip or a sneer or a smile; if all the good that was going to have been done by God for humanity through the church that had been killed by a sneer, by a scornful laugh had been done, the world would have been blessed, as we have never seen it. This is Satan's effort, just to laugh, a tilted lip, pulled sneer, and it can grieve the Spirit of God. He was not playing. Satan knew that people were sensitive, and they do not like to be laughed at. And so this was one of the successful stratagems, and this is something that Satan has been using down across the centuries to stop the work of God. If you can just give it a name, and oh how easy it is to give things a name, give it a name, or if you can just laugh at it, you can kill it. And Satan has seen this. And so here he laughed, he mocked.

¹ Aiden Wilson Tozer (1897-1963) Pastor and Author. Christian and Missionary Alliance

Then in the 20th verse of this 2nd chapter: “Then answered I them,” and— Excuse me, the latter part of the 19th, verse: “What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?” (Neh. 2:19b) Now they are lying. Now look what they have done. First, their hearts are filled with antagonism, then they laughed and despised, and now they have lied. They have built up a case out of lies. They have not faced the truth, taken something and distorted it. Here they are saying, Nehemiah has come to build up this wall in order that Nehemiah can become the Governor, in order that Nehemiah can declare war against the Persians and those that have prospered him, that he can destroy us, that they are going to rebel against the king. Nehemiah had no thought of rebelling against the king. Nehemiah’s only desire was that God should get glory by a rebuilt city, that His testimony should be there. They did not want it, and so the weapon that they used was lies.

This is what they did to the Lord Jesus, the same ones. You will recall that when our Lord was there, the issue was this. He said that no one could go to heaven unless they had had a miracle performed upon them by God, and they said it was enough to be doctrinally correct, to be baptized, to be in the synagogue, to tithe, to fast, to pray, that they did not have to have a miracle. And our Lord said, No. “Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” and this meant that what they had was a house of cards, that they were blind leaders of the blind, that everything they had done was going to crumble when God’s wind blew upon it (Joh. 3:5). They said, We won’t have this. They did not come out and face the issue. Do you know what they did? Oh, they said, He is a wine bibber, and a glutton. They said, He is a fool. He said, “He could take that temple down and build it in three days” (Mat. 26:61). You can’t pay any attention to a man like that. Do you see? They lied. They crucified our Lord with lies. This is always Satan’s effort. Whenever Satan can do anything to hinder the building of the walls, and the getting of a testimony, he is going to use scorn and deceit and despise, and he is going to use lies. These are his instrumentalities. And he always does it through people.

Then we come to the 4th chapter and the 1st verse that I did not read: “It came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.” And he organized to destroy. If he could not destroy it by scorn, and he could not destroy it by causing the people to be despised, and by lies, he was going to destroy it. And so he organized the people to come, and it was at this time that they became frightened of the rubbish, because the people heard ten times, said Nehemiah, accusation was brought against Sanballat and Tobiah. Ten times. He did not wait. He did not go on the first opportunity. He waited until 10 times they had come to him. He took great indignation. He mocked the Jews. He spoke before his brethren. He organized his armies. And listen to it: “What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they build this wall in one day so they can sacrifice the next?” what are they going to do? Try to make themselves a nation? (Neh. 4:2) But if you will look at the 7th and the 8th verse of this 4th chapter, you will discover the end of it all: And “it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,” (very wroth. Before, they were wroth. Now they were very wroth.) “And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.”

Now, what did Nehemiah do? “Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is so much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see,” (we are going to sneak up through the rubbish) “till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease” (Neh. 4:9-11).

There it is. Opposition. Every step of the way. Every step of the way the testimony is opposed, hated. Who is doing the hating? Is it people? Oh yes. You cannot forget that it is people. But it is people that the enemy uses. And so you have got to make your choice. If you fight with people, then you have tied the hands of God, “for vengeance is Mine,” I will requite, and visit, and “revenge saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19). So the moment that you fight with people, you have taken the sword in your hand and there is no opposition. Now, it is, “He that takes the sword shall perish with the sword” (Mat. 26:52). And this is the way most of the work is done. Person to person. Get rid of this person, and everything will be all right, but you see they have failed to see Sanballat and Tobiah. It is not the person. Get rid of the person, and Sanballat and Tobiah will get someone else. Satan will get someone else. It is not the person. That is what we are reading here in Ephesians 6: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, people, but against principalities, Satan, against powers (the princes of darkness), against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Now it is people that Satan uses. Every time he would hinder anything, he uses people. There is no question about that. He himself is seldom seen, seldom comes, but he is able to find people that will for some reason do his bidding. Always whenever he succeeds in leading anyone into sin, it is through the gate of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life. Most of it is through the latter, the opposition pride of life, through position. So opposition to all of God's work, all of God's work through the centuries, has its origin in the prince of darkness, in Satan himself. He is doing everything he can. If you let a testimony be established and there will be unquestionably, that if it is of the Lord, the result that it will be fought.

I am interested in learning that the Catholic Church, when they would make a .. Canonize someone, has what they call the devil's advocate. Some of you may have been aware of that. The purpose is to go and find out as strong a case as possible why someone that is to be canonized is not saintly enough to be listed among the roster of the saints. And one of the sure evidences that a person is not a saint is the fact that he never had any opposition. For any one that had heart set to please God has been opposed, has been hated, and has been fought down to the ground. And if they find someone who otherwise would have been passed for canonization, and the person has never been opposed, that person is - has no possibility of being canonized, because anyone that would serve God would be fought.

Now this was true. Our Lord Jesus said, If you do not believe it, it is only because one thing, "They that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). He did not say "might," He said "shall." Why? Because the prince of this world, the rulers of the darkness of this age are utterly, totally, perpetually opposed to anything that has an eye single to the glory of Christ and would be only for His praise. So it is to be understood. Dr. Simpson² was fought every day of his life; from the time he made that decision to leave the 13th Street Presbyterian Church. In fact, 30 years after he left on the street some of the men that were in the Presbytery, when he announced his resignation, passed him on the street and refused to speak, because they held him in such high contempt for having left their fellowship. Fought to the very ground. All through the years of his ministry. If there be any one thing that would prove to my heart that he was a man of God, it was the fact that he was fought within the Society, and within the church, and outside, and everywhere he went he was fought, because *he had an eye single to the glory of God*, and the only thought that he had was to please Him and to serve Him.

Now I am convinced, dear heart, that when you go to live wholly for Christ in your home, in your church, in your business and in school, that you need not be surprised when the enemy begins to tilt his lip in scorn, begins to despise you, begins to lie about you, and to organize — And the nearer you come to being useful to God, the more intense is going to be the opposition. When a church comes to the place where God is beginning to get something for Himself, be sure of this, the enemy is going to find Sanballats and Tobiahs, and Geshems, and the Ammonites and all the rest and they are going to do everything they possibly can to stop it. He has not changed. What happened here is just a pattern, a picture of what has gone on across the centuries and will go on if the Book of Revelation is God's Word, and I believe it is, until the day He says; It is enough, and it is over. It is not going to change, not going to get any better. We are not looking for a utopia, to the contrary, the plagues became more intense, the persecution became more intense, and actually, studying carefully the Book of Revelation, you will discover that the end came when there was hardly anyone left. That is why the Lord Jesus said, "Will there be faith on the earth?" (Luk. 18:8) There will be a lot of faith in heaven, because the faithful will have endured unto death, and have been put into that body, but there won't be much on earth. Satan is going to find them and to do everything he can to slaughter them.

It is not a very bright picture we have painted. If you want to get someone that is going to have everything getting better, you don't want to come around here. Because, if I understand the Word of God, it says it is going to get worse. The nearer you get to Jesus Christ, and the closer you come to being useful to Him, the more intense is going to be the opposition. There is no question about it. Obviously, if they had wanted, if they had really wanted, if they were sincere, all they would have needed to have done would have been to have come to Nehemiah and to have presented their problems, and things would have been worked out. The fact is that they gave evidence of their insincerity by their utter refusal to ever come to Nehemiah and face the issue; they were seeking, they were grieved because an effort was being made to bring blessing back to Jerusalem.

² Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

Now what are you going to do? He said, "Take your sword in one hand, and your trowel in the other." What is the spiritual application of this? Take the sword of your indignation and your wrath and go out and push everyone through that you meet? No, of course not, because the moment that you do that you are in the same place. You see, my friend, the moment that you defend yourself, you have used up everything worthwhile in the defense, and so if you succeed you failed, because if you are what you thought you were, and that means worthy of being defended, then you did not need to defend yourself, because the Lord was quite capable of doing it. And the fact that you do defend yourself is the proof that you are not sure that you are what you are trying to purport yourself to be. So when you come to the place that you are actually at rest in the Lord, and are completely prepared to allow your case to rest in His hands there is no need. So it was not that. That was not it at all. I do not believe that is what we learned from Nehemiah, spear people through and defend yourself. For Nehemiah was not trying to defend his reputation. The only thing Nehemiah wanted was the walls to be built. Do you see? That is all he was interested in. He was not interested in vindicating himself, or proving to the people that the calumnies of Sanballat raised against him were not true. He did not care about that. The only thing he wanted was the walls to go up, for God to get a testimony. And so, he said, You take the sword in the right hand, and the trowel in the left, and you will build, and you fight.

What is this? Well here it is, "Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11). "...Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand...and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). What does that word stand mean? Just sort of wait? Oh, no. Oh, no. That is not what it means. The word is antihistamine. Have you ever heard it? Oh yes you have. It means to come against something that is moving toward you and cause it to stop. And that is what the word means. "Put on the whole armour of God" so that you can antihistamine; come against so as to cause to stop. What does it mean? This is what it means. You "put on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, your loins girt about with truth, the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith whereby you will be able to quench all of the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:14-17).

And then to stand. What is he saying? That your preparation for warfare is an understanding of your relationship with Christ. You see it is like this. He was crucified for you, but He was also crucified as you. That means that there were two people on the cross, Christ and you. He died for you, but He died as you. You were crucified with Him. You were buried with Him. You were quickened with Him. You were raised with Him. You were "seated with Him, in the heavenlies" (Eph. 2:6). You are seated with Him! What does this mean? His victory is your victory. He led captivity captive, and you were there when He did. So what does it mean to take the sword? It does not mean to take the sword of acrimony and self-defense. That is not what it means. It means to prepare yourself to stand. How do you do that? The helmet of salvation, the blood of Christ covering your mind; breastplate of righteousness, total obedience to the known will of God; loins girt about with truth, completely equipped by understanding of His Word; feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, repentance toward God, faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit; your relationship with Christ prepares you: and when you understand that, then you realize that it is not only to witness, it is not only to teach, it is not only to work, but it is also to be panoplied with the whole armour of God, and to realize that there are opposing forces, the princes of darkness, the powers of hell, and that when God can get a church of people that understand that which is in the little book by J. A. MacMillan³, "The Authority of the Believer", and to love God with all their hearts and are filled with the fullness of God, when He can do that, I say to you God can in any century get the testimony He has been waiting for. But the walls are not going to be built until He has a people that have understood that their opposition, the enmity and the pressure is not from people but "it is from principalities and powers." That is why for 5 years I have been pressing this little book on you, because until we understand that we do not know what it is.

We can work with the trowel, night and day, but until we work with the sword and the trowel our efforts will come to naught. And so here it was not just rubbish, personal attitudes, sin that had to be dealt with, but it was an understanding of our responsibility as laborers together with God, if He is to get the glory that is His due. And so today as we are in the middle of the

³ Rev. John A. MacMillan (1873-1956) Author of "The Authority of the Believer"; "The Authority of the Intercessor" (1942)

20th century as we are facing the last days of time, when we have the cloud of opposition falling, hanging over our head, and the sword of judgment by the horse hair of God's lessening patience, I plead with you to join me in recognizing that our enemy is the ancient enemy of Jesus Christ, Satan and the hosts of darkness who find people. But let us press our battle, not against people, but against, the source of the power of opposition, and see a testimony established because we have had some who have come to understand the use of the sword and the trowel. The trowel speaks of building. The trowel speaks of witnessing. The trowel speaks of service. But the sword speaks of our understanding the whole armour of God, and the authority of the body of Christ. And we will never see a testimony that God wants until sword and trowel are wielded together.

Shall we bow our hearts in prayer.

Our Father, we thank Thee that at Thy right hand this morning is the risen glorified Son. We thank Thee that He led captivity captive, and He gave gifts unto men. "Thou hast exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Php. 2:9-10). We join John who saw "Him in the midst of the candlesticks...saw his head white as wool, white as snow, saw His eyes as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:13-14). "Saw His face shining as the sun for brightness" (Rev. 10:1). Saw the glory Thou hast given Him whom Thou hast exalted, "and he fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. 1:17). Oh Father, we will not be under the circumstances when we serve a risen Lord. We absolutely refuse to be intimidated by the fact that our day and generation is content to make peace. We believe that here on this corner Thou hast through the decades past longed to get a witness and a testimony that would be to the praise of the glory of Thy grace. We know this is Pergamos. We know this is where Satan's seat is, but we know that "greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world," and so Father, we come as a people together, and to kneel at the nail pierced feet of the exalted Son, and with the Apostle Thomas to cry out, "My Lord and My God;" And to admit our helplessness and impotence and weakness, and declare again that the things we count gain to us, we count lost to Christ (I Joh. 4:4; Joh. 20:28). But we throw ourselves upon Thee and say, Oh God, fight for us. Do Thou bring again, Lord, victory. Grant that the Lord Jesus shall receive the glory and the honor and the praise that is His due.

So, Father, we see that behind all is this one that has been ever the ancient adversary and constant foe, for we are told by Thee "we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this age." Oh, we plead the precious blood of Christ over us. We plead, our Father, that those that heard this morning shall not be as those who have seen their face in a mirror and straightway forget what they have seen, but come to Thee in brokenness and ask Thee to save us from all the rubbish that clings and stains, and then to teach us how to stand in the gap and fill up the hedge, using both the sword and the trowel. To that end, Lord, bless our time. Prepare us now as we come to the Table. O what a sensitive moment when we come to the Table of the Lord. Make it a precious time, and somehow may He be able to appear now in the midst of the candlesticks because hearts have bowed low before Him. In His Name and for His sake we ask it. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at the Gospel Tabernacle, New York City, NY on Sunday Morning, December 3, 1961 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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