

A Gospel Goodbye

Colossians: Christ Above All

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Bible Text: Colossians 4:7-18
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Our Scripture lesson this evening comes from Colossians 4:7-18. Colossians 4, beginning to read from verse 7.

7 All my circumstances Tychicus will make known to you. He is the dearly loved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord. 8 Whom I am sending to you for this very reason, that you may know how we are doing and that he may comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, the faithful and dearly loved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of all things on this end. 10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions - should he come to you, receive him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. They are of the circumcision who only are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have proven a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you greets you, a slave of Christ Jesus, always agonizing over you in his prayers, that you might stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I testify about him that he takes great pains on your behalf and those in Laodicea and in those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the dearly loved physician greets you, and Demas. 15 Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and Nympha and the church that is in her house. 16 And when the epistle is read among you, make sure that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "Pay attention to the ministry that you have received in the Lord that you fulfill it." 18 Here's the greeting in my own handwriting, Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Some people have trouble saying goodbye. My mother said that my father was that way. It wasn't that he broke down and bawled or something like that, but he just didn't know how to do it very well. He was just kind of inept when it came to saying goodbye, but Paul seems to do quite well and that's what he's doing here with the church in Colossae. It's time for him to sign off in his letter to the Colossians and he seems to do pretty well with it.

Now, we've tried as we've gone through the book of Colossians to give you a sense of the connection between the various parts and so on as we've moved through it and so on, but sometimes you can lose that. If you need a kind of a summary of where we've been, you can sum it up in basically four statements. You remember that chapter 1, verse 18, is sort of the theme verse of Colossians, the supremacy of Christ in all things. And you see, first of all, Christ as your Lord in chapter 1. He's the Lord of creation. He's the Lord of the church. He's the Lord of the cross. He's the Lord of the Christian. Christ as your Lord, chapter 1.

Chapter 2, Paul speaks of Christ as your liberty. If he's really the one in whom the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, then he's completely adequate. If he's the one who has dealt with your guilt and who has dealt with the power of Satan over you in his cross work, then there's nothing more to be added. You don't have to tack anything onto the sufficiency of Jesus and so he's your liberty. He liberates you also from all the commandments and the extras that man tries to impose on you.

Then in chapter 3, Paul says Christ is your life. He calls him that in verse 4 of chapter 3. Christ is your life and because he makes you a part of a new humanity, there are certain things in your life that go by the boards, there are certain things that then characterize that new life and those things that characterize that new life go right down to, as we said last week, to the nuts and bolts of your everyday relations. So Christ is your life.

Then in chapter 4, Paul says Christ is your labor. He's the one whom you serve. Christ is your labor and you see that especially in our passage tonight.

Now, there's a good bit more in we're in this goodbye segment tonight and there's a good bit more in this than we can deal with but since 9 point sermons are not popular at First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, I'm going to have to abstract and pull and leave out a bunch of stuff as well. So I think the best way to come at this passage tonight is ask the question: what does the apostle do in this goodbye? What does the apostle do in this goodbye? In the first place, the apostle reminds us how Christ recycles dismal failures. I direct your attention especially to verse 10 there. When we do that, in verses 7 through 9, you notice that Paul notes that Tychicus and Onesimus are the carriers of this epistle going from Rome, I think Paul was in Rome then, and taking it back to Colossae. Then he mentions some who are with him and who send greetings to the Colossians and one of those is Mark, verse 10, we know him as John Mark in some passages of Scripture. We have some clips of Mark's biography. His mother was Mary. She was likely a widow, probably fairly well off. She had a house in Jerusalem where the early believers met, read Acts 12. And Barnabas was Mark's older cousin and so Mark goes with Barnabas and Paul on their first mission. They go to Cyprus and then they leave Cyprus and they start to enter up into modern day Turkey and so on and it's at that point that Mark leaves them and goes back home to Jerusalem.

You might say, "Well, why did he do that?" Well, I don't know. It could be several reasons, they're all guesses. Some think, you know, in Acts 12 and 13 there, that for a while there it's Barnabas and Saul, that's the phraseology as though Barnabas kind of has

leadership in the affair. And then after that, it seems to switch over to Paul and Barnabas as if Paul begins to have more of the leadership. And it conceivably could be that Mark got a little upset that his older cousin Barnabas was being eclipsed by Paul's leadership and maybe that didn't sit well with him and there was a little jealousy and so he left. We don't know. It could be that he realized that traveling in the Roman empire and so on and going through some territory was pretty risky and dangerous and it was sometimes nasty and maybe the hardship of it discouraged him. Or maybe he was just homesick and wanted to go back to momma. We don't know but he left them in Acts 13 and went back home.

You know the story as it comes later in Acts 15, Paul and Barnabas say, "Let's go back and try to support and encourage some of the believers that came to the Lord on our first journey, in our first go-round." And Barnabas wanted to take Mark again and Paul was dead-set against this. "Paul, I think Mark's learned his lesson. I think we can depend on him now." "Barney, you can't have a quitter. You've got to have folks you can depend on." And it got pretty heated and so Barnabas and Paul split up. Paul took Silas and Barnabas took Mark, the quitter, and took him to Cyprus with him.

That's where it was, but now a few years later, I don't know, 13-14 years later, it may be, here's Mark who is with Paul. Paul is in prison, probably in Rome under house arrest, chained to a Roman soldier etc. and Mark's with him there and obviously from what he says, he says, "If Mark comes to you, you are to receive him. I've instructed you to that intent." So Mark's been restored to the good graces of Paul and so on. So here he is sticking it out by Paul's side here and you see in 2 Timothy 4:11 that Paul commends him there even later toward the end of Paul's life. So Paul's attitude here has changed and so on.

Quite likely by this time in verse 10 of our text, Mark had written the second Gospel, I call it the breathless Gospel. You know how Mark is, you remember the key adverb he uses, it's translated "immediately." That Greek adverb in the New Testament is used 51 times, 40 of those times are in the Gospel of Mark. Immediately. Immediately. Immediately. Mark's just breathless and he loves the conjunction "and." And. And. And. And this. And that. And that. And immediately. Immediately. He just drags you through the Gospel and he says, "We've got to hurry." He's in the impatient Gospel writer. There's that hymn you know, "Tell me the old, old story." It's not in your Trinity Hymnal, the hymn is, I think, but this one stanza isn't. One stanza goes like this: "Tell me the story slowly. So that I may take it in." And you know what Mark says. "I can't do that! We've got to get through this! I want to drag you through the story of Jesus." So he's a man in a hurry, that breathless Gospel.

As already written, he was the understudy of Peter, 1 Peter 5:13. The Gospel of Mark is quite likely a condensation of the preaching of Peter that Mark produced and he's put out this Gospel and he's sticking by Paul's side in his difficulty and so on and that is Mark. What's the main point of this? Well, Mark was a bum and now he's serving Christ and he's standing even by Paul, the prisoner. The main point is that this ought to touch and encourage us because some of us, even as Christians, know what it's like to walk in

Mark's sandals, don't we? There has been that failure, that disappointment that we were and so on. Don't know what it was, maybe in your case it was a moral failure. Even after you became a Christian and there was a moral failure and that has blemished your life and reduced your service to Christ perhaps for a while. Or maybe it was a relational failure. Or it might have been a failure of nerve at some point and that has overshadowed and colored your life. Or it could have been what we might call a wisdom failure. Not something that's sinful but just something that was stupid and it has left its shadow over your Christian experience and so on but that doesn't mean that Christ is finished with you. That doesn't mean that Christ doesn't have work for you to do. That doesn't mean that Christ has written you off. Ask Mark, Mark the failure. Christ recycles dismal failures. Mark is a case in point. We can take a line from the prophecy of Joel, Mark is a testimony that Jesus wonderfully restores the years that the locust have eaten.

So what is Paul doing in this goodbye? Secondly, the apostle shows us what deep commitments the Gospel produces and you see that in verses 10 and 11. What deep commitments the Gospel produces. You notice he wants you to meet Aristarchus. He calls him, verse 10, "my fellow prisoner." Actually, it's "my fellow prisoner of war." And Aristarchus, you go to Acts 20 and you find that Aristarchus was originally from Thessalonica. He was Jewish apparently, Jewish Christian and so on. He was a companion of Paul. He suffered in the violence in Ephesus in Acts 19 when there was that huge riot. Well, Aristarchus was with Paul and Aristarchus was the one that got his scrapes and bruises and so on in that riot. He was with Paul there. He also sailed with Paul to Jerusalem and then when Paul went as a state prisoner from Caesarea on the west coast of Israel to Rome, Aristarchus sailed with him in that horrendous Acts 27 voyage in which they suffered shipwreck. Aristarchus was with Paul and now he's there in Rome when Paul is under house arrest. "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner of war sends greetings to you." Yes, Aristarchus, what a deep commitment he had to Paul in sticking with him.

Now, this phrase "fellow prisoner of war, fellow prisoner" may have more behind it than we realize. You notice also that Luke is mentioned. He's a Gentile but Luke is mentioned in verse 14. Luke and Aristarchus were apparently both with Paul when he sailed from Caesarea and went to Rome and is under house arrest in Rome. It's interesting that Sir William Ramsay makes the point and we can't be sure, okay, this is one of those historical points that you can't be definite or absolutely cocksure about, but Sir William Ramsay said that it's very likely that Aristarchus and Luke both became Paul's slaves in order that they could accompany him to Rome. He gives an example cited by Pliny that the fellow who was to go apparently to Rome, he was a prisoner and so on, and his wife wanted to go with him. She was not allowed to go. She was refused permission. But he had a couple of slaves, they were allowed to go, his valet and so on and another slave and they could perform services for him and his wife promised to do all of that that the slaves would do and so on. She wanted to be with her husband. No, she couldn't but their slaves could go with him. Ramsay says that may be why Luke and Aristarchus were able to go with Paul from Caesarea to Rome and stay with him in prison. Not because they were friends of him necessarily, that wasn't enough, but they may have voluntarily become Paul's slaves so they would be allowed to go with him and stay with him. That's a pretty deep commitment.

A few years back my wife ripped out a page out of some children's Sunday school material that we had in our denomination and it was about fifth graders, at that level, and it told about Suriname on the north coast of South America. And it said to the children, there were some missionaries back, I don't know, about 1800 or so, that went to Suriname and there was an island off the coast of Suriname on which there were plantations and slaves worked on these plantations and the missionaries in Suriname wanted to bring the Gospel to those slaves on that island who were working on those plantations but they weren't allowed to because the owners of the plantations wouldn't let anybody talk to those slaves except other slaves. And so on one side of the sheet is: what would you have done? And then you can flip the sheet over and turn it upside down and you can read the small print of the answer on the other side: the missionaries became slaves themselves so that they could work on the plantations and bring the Gospel to their fellow slaves. That was a deep commitment. That's the sort of thing William Ramsay suggests that Aristarchus and Luke may have done. "Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner of war." Deliberately put themselves, became Paul's slaves in order that they could stay by his side. That's a deep commitment that the Gospel works between the servants and among the servants of Christ.

You see something more here, perhaps in verse 11 where not only is Paul talking about Aristarchus, but he talks about Mark and then he talks about Jesus who is called Justus. So you have these three, Aristarchus, Mark and Justus, and he says, "They are of the circumcision." Now it probably means they're Jewish. They're Jewish Christians. And then he adds, it's a strange, it's hard to know how to take the grammar of the text here in some ways, but they only are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God. Now, they weren't the only ones. There was Luke, but Luke's a Gentile etc. verse 14. But what he probably means is they are the only ones of these Jewish Christians who are still my fellow workers for the kingdom of God and they have proved, they are the ones who have proved a comfort to me and they have been, that Paul had lost a good bit of support among the Jewish Christian community and the Jewish Christians had kind of slacked off in their care and loyalty of Paul. But there were these three, these only are my fellow workers among the Jewish Christians and they have proven a comfort to me. That's always the case, isn't it?

You see, what the text is saying here or implying is that there is glue in the Gospel. It binds you to others. It just tends to work that way and these commitments among and between the servants of Christ sometimes go very deep, far more deeply than blood relations oftentimes. Some of you know what that's like. These commitments run deep and they inevitably bring great comfort to other servants of Christ like Paul in this case.

I don't know if I mentioned it here or not, I may have, if so, forgive me. You've probably forgotten about it anyway. But sometimes it's not that I'm losing it particularly but sometimes you use an illustration or you expound a text somewhere else and you forget whether it was in some conference somewhere else or whether it was here and so on. After a while, your brain just becomes like melded Jello, it just kind of all runs together so you forget to make those distinctions. But in any case, as I said, even if I told you this

here, you probably haven't remembered it so it serves you right. But there is this, I guess you call it a novel by John Buchan, the early 20th century Scottish author, it's called "Witch Wood" and it's about a David Sempill who was a Scottish, young Scottish minister some time in the 1600s and he was going to be ejected from his parish by the Presbyterian. It wasn't any doctrinal heresy that was involved, it was one of those other things that sometimes come up in churches where there is a stink and so on. So he was going to be relieved of his duties by the Presbyterian and on a particular Sunday before this happened, David Sempill had been preaching and so on and after the service, there was a fellow, a farmer in his congregation who was kind of hanging around until other people left as if he wanted to say something to the minister. Finally folks left and so he accompanied the minister on his way walking back to the manse and you could tell that there was something that he wanted to say and yet at the same time he had a hard time like lots of us trying to get to it and he talked of crops and he talked of the weather and so on. Finally they got to the manse gate and Amos Richey said to his minister David Sempill, "If there's deep waters to be crossed, sir, I'll ride the ford with ye." That's kind of a Scottish way of saying, "If you have to walk through deep waters, I'll wade through them with you."

Now, I know it's a novel etc., it's a story, it's not real life in a way, but can you imagine if you were in that situation, what that would mean to that beleaguered young pastor to have somebody say, "If you walk across through deep waters, I'll wade through them with you." They would be a comfort just as these were with Paul and that's what Paul is speaking of here. You have servants of Christ who insist on standing by your side and when you experience that kind of deep commitment, it is a huge comfort to you. The Gospel produces such deep commitments.

But then what is the apostle doing in this goodbye? Thirdly, the apostle commends the ministry of intercessory prayer, verses 12 and 13. "Epaphras who is one of yourselves greets you, a slave of Christ Jesus, always agonizing over you in his prayers that you might stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God, for I bear witness about him that he takes great pains over you and those in Laodicea and those in Hierapolis." Now, he commends intercessory prayer by speaking of Epaphras. Now, Epaphras, go back to chapter 1, verse 7, Epaphras was the church planter that started the church in Colossae. We have to put pieces together. It may be that Epaphras heard Paul when Paul was ministering in Ephesus and it may be that he came to Christ under Paul's ministry in Ephesus. Then sometime later, he may have gone even with Paul's approval over 100 miles east to his hometown of Colossae and he began to bring the Gospel to people in his hometown and the church at Colossae came into being. That was Epaphras. He was preaching and teaching in the Lycus River valley and perhaps established the churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis as well as a kind of a three point charge perhaps, you might say.

Right now, he was with Paul in Rome when Paul was in prison, apparently visiting him and keeping tabs with him and so on but Epaphras was one of the Colossians. He belonged with them. He was their fellow. He was one of theirs but right now he is with Paul and so you can imagine Epaphras saying, "Paul, please give them greetings from me. Greet my own people for me." And Paul does but he does more. He also commends

Epaphras' ministry. Epaphras doesn't tell you this about Epaphras, it's Paul that tells you. Not only does he send Epaphras' greetings but he describes Epaphras as always agonizing over you in his prayers etc. He describes the intensity and the arduousness of his praying and what is his praying about? What does he take, as Paul says, such great pains over them for? Well, "that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God." Epaphras prays for the steadfastness of the Colossian believers because they have so much weird philosophy coming in and weird cults promoting their own twisted teaching, tacking on spooky superstitions in addition to Christ alone and so on and Epaphras wants them to stand steadfast in their faith and the sufficiency of Jesus and that's what he prays.

Now, it's sort of like when he talks about Epaphras always agonizing over you in his prayers, it's the same attitude that Paul has in 1 Thessalonians 3:8. You remember when Paul says to the Thessalonians, "For now we live if you stand fast in the Lord." It's as if Paul's life depends on how steady the Thessalonians are in their faith. He kind of rides with them. You know something of what that's like, that's the way Epaphras is. He is so concerned, he has such anguish and anxiety over the Colossian Christians that he agonizes in prayer over them and he turns his anxiety and his anguish into intercessory prayer for their steadfastness, that they would remain firm in Jesus. That's what he does. So it's Paul, really, who says to these Colossians, "You know, Epaphras sends his greetings but I want you to know about Epaphras, you have a pastor who pores out his soul in prayer for your steadfastness."

Now, of course, one doesn't need to be a pastor to give himself to a ministry of intercession. It's a ministry open to all the saints, even if we're physically limited from other kinds of ministry. Steve Brady has an interesting story that he tells, well, he says, he talks about the Keswick Convention in England. It's quite a big kind of Bible conference affair, and he said there was once a speaker, a fellow that spoke at the Keswick Convention a good number of times called Leif S. and the time came when he died and so on but Steve Brady said it was about, well, it was over 30 years ago when he was himself speaking and preaching somewhere near Liverpool and someone wanted him to visit an elderly lady. Well, it turns out this elderly lady was this Leif S.'s mother and Steve Brady says she was just a little bag of bones in a bed and he says, "I was warned before I went, make sure you've got time on your hands when you go to see her." Now, Brady asked, "Why?" And they said, "All that woman does is pray." Well, Steve Brady said, "That sounded interesting and exciting to me and I was shown into a room when I arrived, briefly introduced and she then said, 'So nice to meet you, brother. I haven't got much time today so let's just pray.'" And then Brady says, "For the next 45 minutes we were at the throne of God as this woman interceded for others. Yes, we are all called to pray but God may give some of us this special ministry of prayer."

Haven't you found that to be so? Don't you find that in your own praying by and large that most of your petitionary prayer is probably not for yourself. Most of your petitionary prayer is probably prayer for others. Don't you find that oftentimes it's intercession for others that tends to dominate your petitions? And you don't need to have, whether you have a theological degree or whether you're nothing more than a little bag of bones in a bed, you can take your anxieties and your worries over the people of God and you can

turn them into intercessions at the throne of grace. Well, that's what Paul's doing here. He commends to you the ministry of intercessory prayer. That's part of his goodbye.

So what is the apostle doing in this goodbye? Well, fourthly, the apostle leaves us under the power of Jesus, verse 18. The apostle leaves us under the power of Jesus. Well, we have to rush on, don't we? There are greetings to believers in Laodicea as you look at verses 15 and following, and especially to a lady named Nympha who apparently was fairly well-to-do; she had a gathering of believers that met in her house and so there were greetings there. And Paul gave orders about the public reading of his epistles at Colossae and so on and that his epistle was to be read at Laodicea, that the epistle from Laodicea was to be read at the church at Colossae and we don't know what that epistle from Laodicea was. There are two views and we don't know so we won't go there.

Then you have this little clip in verse 17, "And say to Archippus, 'Pay attention to the ministry you've received in the Lord that you fulfill it.'" Now, Archippus was apparently the present pastor at Colossae or in charge of the congregation. It's an interesting note, isn't it there in verse 17. By the way, it reminds me of a cartoon I saw in Christianity Today years and years ago where they would once in a while have these cartoons that were a takeoff on biblical situations and it showed a fellow up in front of a congregation, it was kind of a podium and he had a scroll and he was reading Colossians to the assembled believers and he had come to that part there at the end of what is our chapter 4, verse 17, and he's reading the very end here of the epistle and Archippus is sitting on the platform right by this fellow who's reading at the podium and Archippus is slouched over in a chair in a kind of a slovenly sort of a way. The caption in the cartoon as the fellow reads is, "And say to Archippus, 'Get with it.'" That may be the thrust behind verse 17 here to stir up Archippus to his duties.

But then you come to verse 18 and that's what I want you to see that the apostle leaves you under the power of Jesus. When you get to verse 18, you find authenticity, poignancy and sufficiency. You see authenticity in that the apostle says, "Here's the greeting in my own handwriting, Paul." Paul, if you read 2 Thessalonians, you'll understand that Paul was having a little bit of trouble with people writing letters as though they came from Paul but they were phonies and so Paul adopted the practice of making sure he authenticated his epistles by taking at the end of them, the stylus and signing his own scrawl at the end of the epistle so they would know it was really his.

So it was a matter of authenticity here but when Paul did that, of course, the chain by which he was hooked up to the Roman soldier guarding him, rattled and so on and it was probably a little inconvenient and he added, "Remember my chains." Just a little bit of poignancy there, isn't there?

Then, of course, he ends in the note of sufficiency, "Grace be with you." Grace be with you. Now, grace is the last word. Paul leaves them under Jesus' power. Now, you might say, "Why do we say that? Isn't grace saving grace? Don't we go to Ephesians 2:8 and 9?" Yes, yes, "for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it's God's gift, not of works lest anyone should boast," etc. Yes, that's true. It all depends on

that "but God" in Ephesians 2:4, "but God was rich in mercy in our despair and our depravity and our damnation, made us alive together with Christ." That's saving grace and it's God's unmerited favor. He did it. But saving grace isn't the only kind of grace God gives, if you want to put it that way. There's also not just saving grace but sustaining grace. All you need to do is go to 2 Corinthians 12:9. You remember that situation, Paul recounts where he said there was a time when he prayed specifically on three different occasions that God would relieve him of his malady. It's apparently some...it's the thorn in the flesh passage, and we don't...well, I don't know anyway what it was. It was some kind of severe physical affliction apparently and he asked God, he asked Christ to relieve him and to take it away and Jesus' answer was, he records it, "My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness." I like F. F. Bruce's paraphrase of that text which even though it's a paraphrase is a faithful one. Bruce renders it that Christ said, "My grace is all you need for my power is most fully displayed when my people are weak."

Well, what's that? That's sustaining grace. Do you see what he says? "My grace is all you need. My power." He defines his grace in terms of his power so, "My grace is all you need for my power is most fully displayed when my people are weak." So grace is also power. Grace is Jesus' power that holds up his people in all their weakness and need. It's grace, saving grace. It is, it's saving grace but it's also sustaining grace and that's the kind of grace that Paul is praying and conferring upon the Colossians. "Grace be with you." Though grace is not only God's unmerited favor that rescues you from the pit, it's also Christ's sustaining help that keeps you on your feet and that's the way Paul ends. He leaves you under the power of Jesus. "Grace be with you."

You can't find a better picture of that, can you, than in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Some of you know that scene, Christian comes into Interpreter's house and Interpreter brings him around and shows him various scenarios and instruct him in the basics of the Christian life and Bunyan says that Christian saw in his dream that the interpreter took him by the hand and led him to a place where a fire was burning against a wall and there was one standing beside it, casting much water upon it in order to put the fire out yet the fire burned higher and hotter. So Christian asked Interpreter, "What does this mean?" Interpreter said, "This fire is the work of grace that is wrought in the heart. He that casts water upon it to extinguish it and put it out is the devil, but in that thou seest the fire not withstanding burn higher and hotter thou shalt also see the reason of that." So he took Christian around to the back side of the wall and there he saw a man stooped down with a vessel of oil in which he was continually throwing but secretly, it says, into the fire. The next question, Christian says, "What does this mean?" Interpreter, "This is Christ who continually with the oil of his grace maintains the work already begun in the heart by the means of which not withstanding what the devil can do, the souls of his people prove gracious still. And in that thou sawest that the man stood behind the wall to maintain the fire. This is to teach thee that it is hard for the tempted to see how this work of grace is maintained in the soul," because it is done secretly and you're not aware that it's taking place. But there is grace that continually flows from Jesus to keep his people on their feet. "Grace be with you."

So come to the end of Colossians and you've still got your temptations and you've still got your fears and you've still got your uncertainties and nothing has particularly happened to them but you also have grace because in the end that's what weak, weary, worn and wobbly believers really need, to be assured that they are under the power of Jesus, the man behind the wall.

Holy Spirit, you are good to us. You take even the clean-up portions of the Scriptures and cause them to work for our profit and for our instruction and you are worthy of all our praise. Amen.