

Onward

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Ephesians 4:1, "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all humility..." It's bad when you have a child and you're in the middle of a row, right? Verse 2, "...with all humility and gentleness with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all, but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, 'When He ascended on high, He led a host of captives and He gave gifts to men.' In saying He ascended, what does it mean but that He had also descended into the lower regions of the earth." Or into the lower parts of the earth. "He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens that He might fill all things. And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped when each part is working properly makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

Father, I ask You to help us right now at this time to begin to delve into these portions of this Ephesian letter that deals with our practice, our duty, our responsibility, our walk. Please help us, Lord. In Christ's name I pray, amen.

We're transitioning. Over the last few weeks/months, we have looked at that prayer at the end of chapter 3:14-19. The doxology at the end, we read over that; didn't spend a huge amount of time. But this portion of Scripture there led us to the Song of Solomon because in the prayer here you have Paul praying that according to the riches of God's glory that we would be strengthened to comprehend something of this breadth and length and height and depth, to know this love of Christ. The last time we talked about being filled with all this fullness of God. We are the very dwelling place of God. We're the temple of this new dispensation. Brethren, the reality, those first three chapters of Ephesians, it is not likely that you will encounter more glorious doctrine than what you have there. You may say it's on par with some of the things found in Romans or certain other places in Scripture, but as far as a package of the glories of what it means to be a Christian, nothing surpasses these three chapters. And the truth is that that prayer that we just came off of, I don't think you can invent a higher prayer that one Christian could pray for another than that. Of course, that took us into the Song of Solomon, which I think is correct. Those who have said it's the holy of holies among Scripture - it's like the sweetness of Christ's love there. This is just an absolutely spectacular prayer. One of the

brothers I was praying with on Wednesday asked me if I would pray this prayer for him. And I would ask the same of all of you. In fact, I would encourage you to pray this for one another. Don't let this get away from you. (incomplete thought)

And here's the thing, as we're transitioning, I feel like I need to say something. I've been told by some of you how the Lord has used the recent sermons, especially those out of the Song of Solomon. I've had some really encouraging feedback. And in fact, I heard more than once when I announced that I was bringing this thing to an end, there were some expressions of sadness about that. But here's the thing, when you look at chapter 4, "I therefore... a prisoner for the Lord..." In fact, you could kind of take some of that descriptive language out. He's basically saying this: After all these things I've said, therefore... I urge you to walk in a certain way. I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling.

What is the "Therefore" There For?

Brethren, what we're dealing with - the word "therefore" at the beginning of chapter 4 declares something. It declares that we must move on. Paul has said all of this. He's hit us with probably the most spectacular prayer imaginable, and he doesn't leave us there. He didn't put a period at the end of that amen and say that's it. I'm done writing to the Ephesians. I've given them the glory. Now, they should be good. In fact, you know what he didn't think? He didn't think that, well, they ought to be able to take all that glorious stuff right there and figure it all out. He didn't think that. You know what he felt? He felt like he's only halfway done. There's still three more chapters to come. I mean, relatively speaking, this is halfway. You remember, originally, the chapter divisions weren't there. But when he came to this "therefore," it basically is in the center of this epistle. He's going on. And he's calling us to go on. That's the reality we're faced with. Therefore. "Therefore" at the beginning of chapter 4 means that all of us need to take what we have been exposed to and we need to go somewhere with it. That's what the therefore is there for. We are not called, you notice, this is what I want us to feel - those of you that felt sad that we were moving on, I kind of felt that too.

In fact, you know what? I was listening to Lloyd-Jones preach a sermon when I was out riding my bike. He said the same thing! He said he was almost in fact tempted to stop his series on Ephesians right here and go somewhere else in the Bible where he could get into the glory again. And I felt that too. I felt a certain sadness. But we shouldn't feel it. Paul wants us to go on. Therefore... we can't just sit, stop, and bask in that glory. Onward - that's the title of my message. Onward. Onward. We've got to go on from here. We've got to. That's what we're being called to do. That's where we're going to go from here on. Onward. Do you see, this "therefore," you see it. Second word in chapter 4. Therefore. It's not casually placed. This is pivotal. This is a word that is strategically placed and it joins. (incomplete thought)

You know, in the first three chapters, I don't believe there was a single imperative. I don't believe that we were told to do anything. I don't think we were told to walk a certain way. It was all indicatives. It was facts. It was the experience of the Christian. It was meant to make us feel the glory, feel how lofty this is. (incomplete thought) What other letter in the Bible even talks about us being seated in the heavenly places with Christ? Or being filled with all the fullness of God? Such expressions, they blow us away. This is not a casually placed "therefore." It's like you're coming out of that, and now, he has three chapters - oh, there's going to be a lot more

indicative. There's going to be more glory. There's going to be more to teach us, but what we're going to get now in rapid succession is instruction. Because that's true, therefore, live this way. Live in a certain way. Live in a way that reflects this truth, these glories.

You know, you get the same kind of thing, have you ever noticed it? When you come to the end of Romans 12? You get twelve chapters of - you talk about extensive - the first three chapters of Ephesians aren't rivaled by anything but perhaps just the extensiveness of the presentation of the Gospel in the first twelve chapters of Romans. And now, after Paul is done with that, what does he say? "I appeal to you, therefore, by the mercies of God." What are the mercies? All that he described in the first twelve chapters. Therefore... I appeal to you on the basis of that Gospel, offer yourselves up as a living sacrifice to God. That is one of those instrumental, very specifically placed, pivotal "therefore's." Not just casually placed. Like our whole life practically swings on this kind of "therefore." There's a truth, a body of truth, that is supposed to lift us up to glory. We're supposed to experience the love of Christ, the indwelling of Christ in our hearts, the strengthening of the Spirit, the fullness of God filling us. These are experiences. These are realities. Seated in the heavenly places.

And what are we supposed to do with it all? Are we supposed to sit in our communes, sit in our convents, sit in our monasteries, or sit within these four walls and bask in the glory forever? That is not what we're called to do in the Christian life. That's not it. No, we must go onward. You know what the "therefore" does? It says, okay, therefore, you have all this. How does all this relate to daily life? What does this all mean practically? How do we apply this to living in this world, interacting with others? What the word "therefore" tells us is that we can't just sit down, camp on this prayer of Paul forever without going forward. Or, sit down, just enjoy the sweetness of the Song of Solomon perpetually. We can't do that with no forward advance. The reality is forward. Paul says "therefore." That means we're to go on in this practical life and living. The interesting thing is I was thinking about going up to the mountaintop.

Look, I can tell you that dealing with this prayer and spending literally hours upon hours upon hours in the Song of Solomon - I was blown away. I mean, I was overcome repeatedly. And it's almost like the "therefore" says: okay, come down. Like come down out of your study. It's on the second floor, so it's kind of applicable. Come down. There's a time to soak that up and to be in that glory. There's a time to get up from that chair and come down. (incomplete thought)

I think, again, I was riding my bike and I was listening to that message by Lloyd-Jones and I was just thinking. I think I got home and all of a sudden, my mind just swept through the entire Scriptures about all the times that God's people have basically been called to come down. I know that the Christian life in one sense is like continuously going up, climbing the mountain, where we desire to go higher and higher and higher. Lord, plant my feet on higher ground. We talk that way. And undoubtedly, there is a way, there is a perspective on the Christian life that is like that. It's like opening up into the fullness of day. You see that, where it gets brighter and brighter. Or we can think of it going higher and higher, but there is another sense in which the Christian life is a repetition of going up to the mountain and then being called to come down. And what I mean is, I repeatedly find God's people doing just exactly this. I would say this, the first three chapters of Ephesians are like a mountain. They just take you to heavenly places. You're going way up filled with all the fullness of God. Higher and higher and higher, knowing the

love, having the ability, the power to comprehend this love of Christ. The flood of thoughts came rushing through about just these realities.\

The Mountaintop

You know, there's the time when the Lord - even the Lord Himself - where'd He go? He went up to the mountaintop. "In these days, He went out to the mountain to pray." And I think about Him there. "All night He continued in prayer to God." Communing. Coming close to the Lord. And then it says, "...and He came down." There's a time to come down. He came down and what did He do? You know what it says He did? You can find this in the three synoptic Gospels where He went up to the mountain to pray. He came down. And Scripture specifically says, "He stood on a level place with a great crowd who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured, and all the crowd sought to touch Him, for power came out from Him and healed them all." You see what happened? He's up on the mountain close to God, communing with God, praying to God, and then He comes down. And what happens? Out into the crowd to basically give. That's really it. To give. Going up on the mountaintop to be recharged, to draw close, to be refreshed, to be invigorated with the communion with His Father. And then He comes down. And you remember when the woman touched the hem? He said, "Virtue has gone out from Me." Do you realize what that's saying? It says that power came out from Him and healed them all. It cost Him something to heal. It came out of Him.

Or I remember this, I remember old Don Johnson. He says that when he first got saved, he thought the Christian life was just one continuous baptism of the Spirit after another. And then you know what happened? God said to him, Don, come down. Onward. You've been exposed to the glory. You've been exposed to this which has overwhelmed your soul. Now, you need to know there's a reality. You need to come down. That's part of the Christian life, but that's not all of the Christian life. There's a "therefore." You have that, therefore, Don, there is a world that is looking for your light. We are the lights of the world. Come down. You have life to live.

Or, I was thinking about Moses. You think about Moses. It says he went to Mount Sinai. Again, here's a mountain again. He goes to the mountain and what does he see? He sees a bush that's burning. Okay, he's getting exposed to the supernatural. He's getting exposed to a manifestation of God. "Moses, take your shoes off. The ground upon which you are standing is holy ground." I mean, you can be sure, he fell on his face. "I am the God of your fathers, of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob." He revealed Himself to Moses: "I AM WHO I AM." And he had the experience, how are they going to know that I was sent by You? And he's throwing his staff on the ground, it's becoming a snake. He puts his hand in there. It's leprous. Back in and now it's not. He was told if they don't believe those two, you're going to turn the Nile to blood. But you know what? You know what God said to him? After all that? "Now therefore go." You can't stay here. You can't stay in all the glory of the fire and the revelation, and Me speaking to you directly like this and standing on the holy ground. Now it's time to go. Now you've got to go to the people.

Or you think of Moses on another occasion. I think of the time in Exodus 34. God said, "Be ready by the morning. Come up in the morning to Mount Sinai." Here's the same mountain again. Here's Moses going back up. "Present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain."

And you remember what Moses said? Again, he's going back. He's going close. Close into the glory. "Show me Your glory." And God, I mean, you have such things said we can just read over this. He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you." It says, "the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with Him there." What was that like? He stood with him there. "...And proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.'" And he goes on, "When Moses came down..." There it is. He had to come down again. Down away from the glory. Down to do what? To go among the people. "He came down from the mountain," it says. And here's the thing, he didn't know something about himself. Do you remember what it was? He didn't know that his face was shining. "His face shone because..." isn't this amazing? "His face shone because he had been talking with God." You see, that's what happens. There's a time to go down with the glory on your face.

You think of Elijah. Mount Carmel. Up on that mountain he goes. Fire fell that the people might know that God is God and Baal is not God. And they repaired the altar and all those prophets of Baal were put to death. And there on that mountain top, he got down, it says, on his face and he put his face between his knees and rain came after how long? Years without a drop of rain in that land. Again, God came in miraculous power. Elijah was vindicated. The people knew who the true God was. But it says the hand of the Lord was on Elijah and then he came down. You've got Jezebel's to deal with.

I think of the Mount of Transfiguration. There's a mountain. They went up on that mountain. And you remember Peter, he said, "Lord, do You want me to pitch some tents here?" You think that was glorious? Jesus being transfigured before them? They're actually seeing Moses and Elijah like we heard? That was really Elijah - not just one that came in the spirit and power of him. That was the Tishbite. John wasn't the Tishbite. John was Malachi's Elijah, but this is the Tishbite. This is Moses. But I guarantee, they weren't at the center of attention. Jesus is manifest - a voice - the Father is speaking. You can imagine, that's a place that you want to stay. His face shone like the sun. You know what Peter said? "Lord, it is good that we are here." You know what? When we were in the Song of Solomon, I could say that. It is good that we are here. But guess what? The hour came: Gentlemen, it's not time for pitching tents. We're going down. We're going down to the bottom. We're going down to the people. There's a time to come down.

Or, again, I thought about the upper room. Okay, that's not a mountain. That's more like my office. It's up on the 2nd floor. But you remember what happened in the upper room. "They went up to the upper room where they were staying. Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James, all these were in one accord and they're devoting themselves to prayer." And you know what happened in Acts 2. "Suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind. It filled the entire house where they were sitting and divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."

But guess what? You don't just sit there amidst the people of God soaking up the glory, enjoying the divided flames over each other's head. "Oh, isn't that neat?" And I don't think they were thinking that. They were thinking not: this is neat. This is glorious. They were blown away.

They're saying Jesus told us to wait. I'll guarantee, they had no doubts in their mind that this is what they had been waiting for because when it came, it came like a mighty rushing wind and they were filled with the Spirit. But guess what? When you're filled with the Spirit, when you've had this revelation, when you've had this experience, it's not time to sit in the upper room. It's time to come down. There's a "therefore" in our lives. How many times throughout Scripture they're called into the glory, but then you come down. Therefore, they must come down.

And see, here's the thing. The mountaintop is necessary. It's necessary. Why? Because when I'm near the Lord, remember Christ: that you might have this Spirit strengthening you in your inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And this knowledge that's knowing Christ - a knowledge that surpasses knowledge, surpasses your understanding; filled with all this fullness of God. Brethren, I can tell you this, that when you're impacted, you're taken up into the high places and allowed to walk - the Song of Solomon - the sweetness of Christ... When we have a consciousness of His presence, do you know what tends to happen? It douses your desire for the world. Look, drawing close to the Lord does something to your desires for your idols, for distractions, your appetite for sin. I mean, when you actually feel: Oh, my emptiness has been replaced. I've been filled with all the fullness of God. I'm seeing something of the love of Christ and Him pouring out His life's blood for me. And I've got a sense of His presence. I've got a sense of: He desires, He calls me, "Come away, My love." How many times did we hear that out of the Song? "Come away." And you get melted by that.

Does that make you want to run out a view pornography? You see, it doesn't. What it does is it fits us to walk worthy of the calling to which we've been called. It prepares us. We need the glories. We need the heights of this sort of doctrine. We need to know it. We need to deeply experience it. Because what? That stimulates and promotes and encourages us to what? Work out our salvation with fear and trembling. To work out our salvation with a sweetness; to work out our salvation with a hatred for sin, with a disdain for it. I mean, you get lifted up into the heavenlies and you taste of that and you come back to the things of this world and it's like, it just feels so empty. Doctrine. That's why. That's why it must come first. That's why we have three chapters rich in this doctrine. The doctrine must always come first. It must always be that which lifts us up to the mountain.

We Must Move On

But we can't just stop there and lay down. It's onward. There's a "therefore." Failure to understand the meaning of this word "therefore" will confound everything about how we live the Christian life. Doctrine. Doctrine. First three chapters. Practice. They are joined by a "therefore." One flows out of the other. One is inspired by the other. That's what "therefore" means. It's the conclusion. It's the result. It's the inference we should draw. It's where it ought to take us. It's the logical conclusion. It goes somewhere. Onward. Onward. We can't divide them separate and leave them as two dysfunctional or disconnected parts. They're integral to each other. They're joined. They must not be divided. The mountaintop of doctrinal revelation in the experience that we found in those first three chapters joined afterward by this Christian practice - the outworking. That's what "therefore" is all about. And you just think about this. Just think about what happens if we build our tents up on the Mount of Transfiguration and we never come down. It's just, you know what, our whole life just needs to be: we're going to soak it all up.

We're going to spend our time with our nose in our Bibles trying to find the glory. And we never come down. Then what happens? The world never sees our Christianity.

But think about what happens. Think about what Christianity is like if we never go to the mountaintop and we just kind of dive in, try to live out the Christian life without experiencing the glories and the doctrine and the power of God. What does that look like? But here's the thing, it's not like it's okay, well, we've done that. We've done the first three chapters. Yes, we've been up to the mountaintop. Okay, we see the "therefore." We recognize we need to come down. We spent time there in the Song of Solomon and we basked in the glory of that. So now, let us come down and live in the lowlands. No. Yes, we must come down. We must plant our feet in the world and do what Jesus said: let our light so shine before others that they may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. But the thing that we have to remember is this: If you forget the speed at which a person reads, you're going to miss something very important.

You say, what do you mean? I mean this. Yesterday, I took my phone, hit the stopwatch, hit go. I read the first three chapters of Ephesians. Guess how long it took me to read it? Just guess. 6 minutes, 44 seconds. You say, so what? But here's the thing, at normal reading speed - I wasn't trying to speed read or anything, I read it out loud the way I would read Scripture to you all when we're reading it before the sermon or as we're ushering into the sermon. At normal reading speed, most average readers, you can clear the whole book in 15 minutes if you don't stop to ponder and meditate which you should do, but I'm just saying if your objective was basically to read it all the way through - even thoughtfully - 20 minutes. What does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. It means that even when you're at the close of the letter in Ephesians 6 dealing with girding yourself with all the armor of God, it was only 7, 8, 10 minutes ago you were just finishing up all the glorious truths we've been looking at for months. Brethren, I'll tell you this, I believe that one of the most dangerous things about expositional preaching is found right here. The assumption is that these glorious truths would be fresh in the minds of the readers all the way through this practical part. Now right now, it is. Because we were so recently there.

But you know what? If this doesn't get preached in such a way to bring us back to these realities (incomplete thought), must we come down? Yes, we must come down. But the reality is we need to return back there again and again and again. You see, our life needs to be a recurring: Go to the mountaintop daily. Go! We need to go back to these truths, back to these realities, back to this experience, back to this love, back to this fullness - being filled with all the fullness of God. Back and forth daily. Going up to the mountaintop. Going up there where Christ went to pray. This is essential. Because if you try to live out the duty of the Christian life without going back there again and again and again and living in those realities - it doesn't need to come from the first three chapters of Ephesians, it may come right out of the pages of the Gospel. It may come out of the first part of Romans or the first part of any of those epistles. It may come from Isaiah 53 - wherever you're reading, but we need to go back and we need to go back to see the glory and stay there long enough until God shows it to us and opens our eyes and the scales come off. This is essential.

Remember how fast an average reader would read this book and how closely tied together what comes before the "therefore" would be tied with what comes after it. It's essential.

There is that essential reality that we are drawing these two things together - what comes before, what comes after. We must not lose the force of the term "therefore." Therefore means - like in Romans - because of the mercies of God, therefore, offer your life a living sacrifice. But you see if you forget the mercies, the "therefore" loses all its power. You have to remember what the mercies are. Same thing's happening here. "I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk..." But you see, the urge - the urgency is lost if you forget what that "therefore" means. Don't let that word pass. This is the fire. This is where the power comes from. We need God to speak. We need God to change us. That's the reality. Don't lose the force of the term "therefore." This means we've got to go back to the mountaintop daily. We can't say: well, we've been there all these months, now it's time to come down. We'll just stay down. Yes, we come down. Yes, we must come down. Yes, come down from the upper room. Yes, come down from Sinai. Yes, come down from the Mount of Transfiguration. Because there's a world out there that needs us. But then you go back. You go back to the glory. You go back again and again. We must go back.

Just a final exhortation. The question is, brethren, do we? Do we? Do you go back to the glories of like the Song of Solomon daily? Are you preaching the Gospel to yourself daily? Are you mindful of the glories? Do you think about being filled with the fullness of God? Do you think about being filled with the Spirit of God? Do you think about the realities in Scripture that we can pray for more of the Spirit? Jesus taught us we should pray for the Spirit. If we then being evil know how to give good gifts to our children, we're told, how much more is our Father in heaven going to give the Spirit to those that ask? We have these realities. We are told that the works that Jesus does - if we're believers in Him, that the works that He does, we will do too and greater works because He is going to His Father.

But you know what? You will not do that unless you have been to the mountaintop like He was. Back up we must go. Back up. Because you know what happens? You try to dive into these duties. You've got all these things to do. Oh, well, it says I need to work with my hands and it says I need to walk in a certain way and it says I need to be doing these different things and I need to control my mouth and I need to use it a certain way and I need to be involved in singing and I need to love my husband, love my wife, and submit to my husband, and I've got children and I shouldn't do this and I shouldn't do that, and all this instruction. I'll tell you what, you lose sight of the mountaintop, you lose sight of the glory up there and you know what's going to happen? You will become like Martha, just distracted and disturbed and agitated by all manner of different things, and there's Mary. "Martha, Martha..." You see, we can be distracted of what really matters. "You're anxious and troubled about many things. One thing is necessary..."

Is it necessary to come down? You better believe it. But is it necessary to sit at His feet? That is the thing that is needful to charge you to live this life, to prepare you to live this life and all our activities and all our responsibilities, in all the work that lies before us - and there is work! We must work while it's day. But we need men and women who fight to get back to the mountaintop. And that means you have to make decisions in your life to make certain that you get there. You need to put the cell phone down, the iPad down, the computer down, turn off the TV, turn off the movie, turn off this world and go back there. We need to go back there and come down and go back there and then come down. That is absolutely essential. The mountaintop

calls us. May God help us not to be content with a bunch of religious activity. It's on the mountaintop that Moses beheld His glory. And it's on the mountaintop that as he communed with the Lord, that glow came to be upon his face. And don't think that has nothing to do with the New Testament believer, because the Apostle Paul looked at that very example and said let me tell you something, that is what it is to be a Christian. That is exactly what it is to be the Christian.

What happens? What happens when we see the glory? What happens when we go back face-to-face with God? What happens? I'll tell you what happens. The same thing that happened to Moses will happen to us. This is what 2 Corinthians 3 is all about - the glory gets on us. God burns into our hearts and upon our faces the image of the Son of God. And when we go down from the mountain and out into the world, what happens? The world sees the glory. "We all..." You see, the veil has been taken off. What does that mean? Nothing stands in the way anymore. Do you realize what that means, Christian? It means that you are one of the select few on the face of the earth that has had the veil taken off. Which means, God has put you in a place to be emblazoned by His glory if you will but expose yourself to it. The veil is gone. "We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord." He's been talking about Moses being exposed to the glory and having that glory on his face. "We... are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." We come down from the mountain. And you know what, the onlooking world will see the glory. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ etched into us, into our character, into our person.

Look, there's something, when you hear - when I was saying to you that this is Christ in the Song of Solomon: "Come away, come away..." And you hear that and it sounded sweet. But you see, you don't want to stop there. You actually do want to go away with Him. And then come down. Go to the Mount of Transfiguration. See the glory break through so that you see He's way beyond just a mere man. You behold the glory. It's being like Christ that turns the world upside down.

The thing is if we try to go on to chapter 4, 5, and 6 of Ephesians and we lose sight of that term "therefore" and forget its significance in the fact that it joins what went before with what's coming after, then you know what - you know what will happen? You try to be dutiful and you try to do and you try to work without the image of Christ being emblazoned into your soul, you know what you'll be? You'll just be hollow religionists. It's a form of godliness, but it lacks the power. The power comes from a close intimacy with Christ. It's just a bunch of smoke. We don't want that. Burning. Shining. Oh, that's the description that was given to John the Baptist.

We need to come back and adorn ourselves with the doctrine. Have you ever read that? That we are to adorn ourselves with the doctrine. That's what Paul's calling for. Go to the glories of Ephesians 1, 2, and 3 and robe yourself with it. Wear it. Put it on. Oh God, may He wash our souls in the wonder of all this, in the love of the cross. God, fill us. Fill us with all the fullness of God according to the riches of His glory like He promises there. Do that! Strengthen us by Your Spirit that Christ might dwell deeply. Remember that word? To settle down deeply. We desperately need churches full of people who are - like Carey said - attempting great things for God, but we need people who are desperate to know the living God, to know Him, to know the power of His resurrection, the power of His work in His people. Let us go back there, brethren.

As we break forth now into these three chapters, live at the mountaintop, and then come down. Therefore, come down. And then we must go back. And then come down. There's a dark world. There's a dark world. And the last thing I want as we transition is to say, we can leave that behind. Now we turn to the practical realities. No. If you read this letter from end to end at a normal speed, you know that that is not what God intended. God intends you to be constantly thinking about that "therefore" all the way through and motivated by the realities behind why that word is there. May God help us. Amen.