

"The Worthy Walk"

First Thess 2:1-12

(52-9)

As you follow Paul from country to country (Rom. 15:19), mark how he suffered for Christ's sake in his missionary labors. Here is a list for you to ponder over with your open Bible-

- Enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extreme danger (II Cor. 11:23-27).
- Assaulted by the populace, punished by magistrates (Acts 16:19-24; 21:27).
- Scourged, beaten, stoned, left for dead (Acts 14:19-20).
- Expecting wherever he went a renewal of the same treatment and the same dangers (Acts 20:23).
- Driven from one city, he preached in the next (Acts 13:50-51; 14:5-7,19-21).
- Spent his whole time in missionary work, sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety (Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:14-15; Phil. 1:20; 3:8).
 - Persisted in this course to old age, unaltered by the experience of perverseness (Acts 28:17);
 - Ingratitude (Gal. 1:6; 4:14-20);
 - Prejudice (II Cor. 12:15);
 - And desertion (11 Tim. 4:10, 16).
- Unsubdued by anxiety, want, labor, or persecution, unwearied by long confinement, undismayed by the prospect of death (Acts 21:13; II Cor. 12:10; Phil. 2:17; 4:18; 11 Tim. 4:17).

At his conversion, Paul was warned of the many things he would have to suffer for Christ's sake (Acts 9:16), and as he came to suffer e never sighed or moaned but gloried in his tribulations and was prouder of his scars in battle than a soldier of his medals and decorations (Gal. 6:17). What a

warrior-missionary he was! The world has never seen his like (*All the Apostles of the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972, 219-20).

With Paul the expression "in Christ" is found 164 times, as justified in Christ " -(Gal. 2:17), " God's righteousness in him " (2 Cor 5: 21). Of this blessed, life-penetrating secret all his letters speak, each in its particular and especially prominent aspect.

Thus:

In Romans -justification in Christ;

In Corinthians -sanctification in Christ;

In Galatians -freedom in Christ;

In Ephesians-oneness in Christ;

In Philippians-joy in Christ;

In Colossians-fullness in Christ;

In Thessalonians - glorification in Christ.

And what did his heart for ministry produce? A life on a daily basis that was:

1. Fearless [2: 1]
2. Genuine [2: 3]
3. Honest [2: 5]
4. Loving [2: 7]
5. Passionate [2: 8]
6. Dedicated [2: 9-11]

"Happy are they who bear their share of the world's pain-. In the long run they will know more happiness than those who avoid it," said Jesus (translation by J.B. Phillips).

A Mother's Bequest (1879-1975)¹

I have referred several times to my mother's life in the hills called "Mountains of Death," where I was born. I lived with my parents for nine happy years before going away to England for schooling. There I stayed with two aunts in a

¹ Brand & Yancey, PAIN:THEGIFTNOBODYWANTS, p. 306-9.

majestic house in a suburb of London, the estate home my mother had grown up in. The Harris family was a prosperous one, and the house contained numerous reminders of what life had been like for Evelyn, my mother, in her pre-missionary days. It was furnished in mahogany, its cabinets filled with priceless heirlooms.

MY aunts told me that Mother used to dress with a certain flair, and showed me some of her silks and laces and long-plumed hats still hanging in the closet. She had studied at the London Conservatory of Art, and I saw the watercolors and oils she had painted years before. There were portraits of my mother as well; my aunts told me that the men students used to compete for the privilege of painting beautiful Evelyn. "She looks more like an actress than a missionary," someone had remarked at her farewell party before the voyage to India.

When my mother returned to England, though, after my father's death from black water fever, she was a broken woman, beaten down by pain and grief *could this bent, haggard woman possibly be my mother?* I remember thinking at the time. I made a foolish adolescent vow, so shocked was I at the change in her: *If this is what love does, I will never love another person so much.*

Against all advice, my mother returned to India, and there her soul was restored. She poured her life into the hill people, nursing the sick, teaching farming, lecturing about guinea worms, rearing orphans, clearing jungle land, pulling teeth, establishing schools, digging wells, preaching the Gospel. While I was staying in the manor house of her childhood, she was living in a portable hut, eight feet square that could be taken down, moved, and re-erected. She traveled constantly from village to village. On camping trips into the countryside she would sleep in a tiny mosquito net shelter that gave no protection from the elements (when

storms came in the night, she wrapped herself in a raincoat and propped an umbrella over her head).

Mother was 67 when I first went to India in 1946 as a surgeon. We lived only 100 miles apart, though it took a full 24 hours to reach her place in the hills. Her active years in the mountains took their toll. Her skin was weather beaten, her body was infested with malaria, and she walked with a limp. She had broken an arm and cracked several vertebrae being thrown off a horse. I expected she would be retiring soon. How wrong I was.

At the age of 75 she was still working in the Kolli hills, Mother fell and broke her hip. She lay all night on the floor in pain until a workman found her the next morning. Four men carried her on a string-and-wood cot down the mountain path to the plains and put her in a jeep for the agonizing hundred-mile ride over rutted roads. I was out of the country when the accident occurred, and as soon as I returned I scheduled a trip to the Kolli Malai with the express purpose of persuading Mother to retire.

I knew what had caused the accident. As a result of pressure on spinal nerve roots from the broken vertebrae, she had lost some control over the muscles below her knees. Limping, and with a tendency to drag her feet, she had tripped over a doorsill while carrying a jug of milk and a kerosene lamp. "Mother, you're fortunate someone found you the next day," I began my rehearsed speech. "You could have lain there helpless for days. Shouldn't you think about retiring?"

She stayed silent, and I took the opportunity to pile on more arguments. "Your sense of balance is no longer so good, and your legs don't work well. It's not safe for you to live alone up here where there's no medical help within a day's journey. Think of it. Just in the last few years you've had fractures of your vertebrae and ribs, a concussion of the

brain, and a bad infection on your hand. Surely you realize that even the best of people do sometimes retire before they reach eighty. Why don't you come to Vellore and live with us? We have plenty of good work for you to do, and you'll be much closer to medical help. We'll look after you, Mother."

My arguments were absolutely compelling-to me, anyway. Mother was unmoved. "Paul," she said at last, "you know these mountains. If I leave, who will help the village people? Who will treat their wounds and pull their teeth and teach them about Jesus? When someone comes to take my place, then and only then will I retire. In any case, why preserve this old body if its not going to be used where God needs me?" That was her answer.

For Mother, pain was a frequent companion, as was sacrifice. I say it kindly and in love, but in old age Mother had little of physical beauty left in her. The rugged conditions, combined with the crippling falls and her battles with typhoid, dysentery, and malaria, had made her a thin, hunched-over old woman. Years of exposure to wind and sun had toughened her facial skin into leather and furrowed it with wrinkles as deep and extensive as any I have seen on a human face. Evelyn Harris of the fancy clothes and the classic profile was a dim memory of the past. Mother knew that as well as anyone-for the last twenty years of her life she refused to keep a mirror in her house.

And yet with all the objectivity a son can muster, I can truly say that Evelyn Harris Brand was a beautiful woman, to the very end. One of my strongest visual memories of her is set in a village in the mountains, possibly the last time I saw her in her own environment. When she approached, the villagers had rushed out to take her crutches and carry her to a place of honor. In my memory, she is sitting on a low stonewall that circles the village, with people pressing in from all sides. Already they have listened to her praise

them for protecting their water supplies and for the orchard that is flourishing on the outskirts. They are listening to what she has to say about God's love for them. Heads are nodding in encouragement, and deep, searching questions come from the crowd. Mother's own rheumy eyes are shining, and standing beside her I can see what she must be seeing with her failing vision: intent faces gaze with trust and affection on one they have grown to love.

No one else on earth, I realized then, commanded such devotion and love from those villagers. They were looking at a bony, wrinkled old face, but somehow her shrunken tissues had become transparent and she was all lambent spirit. To them, and to me, she was beautiful. Granny Brand had no need for a mirror made of glass and polished chromium; she could see her own reflection in the incandescent faces around her.

It was a few years later that my mother died, at the age of ninety-five. Following her instructions, villagers buried her in a simple cotton sheet so that her body would return to the soil and nourish new life. Her spirit, too, lives on, in a church, a clinic, several schools, and the faces of thousands of villagers across five mountain ranges of South India.

A co-worker once remarked that Granny Brand was more alive than any person he had ever met. By giving away life, she found it. Pain she knew well. But pain need not destroy. It can be transformed. A lesson my mother taught me that I have never forgotten.

How did he do that against such odds? So what was it that kept him going? HE HAD A NEW REASON TO LIVE: Wait for Son [1: 10]. Paul was a living example of one looking expectantly for Jesus!

I. Fearless [2: 1] and that is what he taught every group he ministered to!

- A. Waiting for Jesus is Denying ungodliness Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; (KJV)
- B. Waiting for Jesus is Watching Eagerly. Philippians 3:20-21 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (KJV)
- C. Waiting for Jesus is Living and Dying in hope Genesis 48:15-16 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. (KJV)
- D. Waiting for Jesus is seeing God's Hand Genesis 50:19-20 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. (KJV)
- E. Waiting for Jesus is Looking for a city with foundations Hebrews 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (KJV)

- II. Genuine [2:3] they had experienced the DOCTRINE OF SALVATION.² Some years ago a man in a penitentiary studied a Moody correspondence course. He found Christ. In answer to one of the questions, which gave him an opportunity to express where he stood in relation to his newfound faith, he wrote down: "I am a new man in an old body." It was a most perceptive remark. For that is what salvation is. But it will go even further than that saved prisoner realized. One day he will be a new man in a new body.
- A. REPENTANCE: A CHANGE OF MIND Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: (KJV)
 - B. REGENERATION: A CHANGE OF HEART John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (KJV)
 - C. CONVERSION: A CHANGE OF LIFE Matthew 18:3 and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)
 - D. ADOPTION: A CHANGE OF FAMILY Romans 8:14-17 for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (KJV)
 - E. SANCTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR Hebrews 10:14-16 For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for

² Phillips, 100 New Testament Outlines, #100.

after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (KJV)

- F. JUSTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF STATE Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (KJV) ILLUSTRATION: "justified" In popular, everyday language the word can be paraphrased: "just as if I'd never sinned." Some years ago a wealthy Englishman bought a Rolls Royce car and took it to France on his vacation. It broke down. At great expense the factory flew out a mechanic and not only repaired the car but entertained the customer in the best available hotel. When he arrived home he expected to receive a large bill but none came. Eventually he wrote, asking for his account to be rendered. He received this reply: "Dear Sir, We have no record of anything ever having gone wrong with your car." That is exactly what it means to be justified. It means that God has no record of anything ever having gone wrong in our lives.
 - G. GLORIFICATION: A CHANGE OF PLACE John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (KJV)
- III. Honest [2:5]
- IV. Loving [2:7] What is loving ministry based upon?
- A. JUSTIFICATION -- A Sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.
 - B. REDEMPTION -- A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by His ransom.
 - C. FORGIVENESS -- A Sinner stands before God as a debtor and is forgotten by His payment.

- D. RECONCILIATION -- A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.
 - E. ADOPTION -- A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.
- V. Passionate [2:8] What kind of heart can minister under any condition? One that is waiting for Jesus! What are the benefits of waiting for the Son? What will looking at Jesus help you overcome or at least endure? Who waited for Jesus and when?
- A. ENOCH LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH DEMON TIMES Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. (KJV); Hebrews 11:5-6 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (KJV). The world was literally on its last leg. Evil was everywhere. God was almost closed out. People were so wicked they had to be exterminated! And what does one do while looking for Jesus? Jude 14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (KJV)
 - B. JOB LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH SICKNESS AND SUFFERING TIMES Job 19:25-26 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: (KJV) Satan buffets, beloved children die, life savings destroyed, wife torments,

friends accuse and his body wastes! That is affliction! And what did he do while looking for Jesus? He spoke of Him: Job 19:25-26 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: (KJV)

- C. MOSES LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH DISSAPPOINTING TIMES Deuteronomy 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. (KJV) What amazing disappointments Moses faced!
1. Meteoric career in Egyptian Politics and military but hot temper puts him in desert obscurity
 2. Quiet family life in the country, God's call puts him in the hot seat away from his family.
 3. As a willing servant he became the greatest deliverer of all time next to Christ.
 4. As a humble follower he became the greatest prophet, knowing God face to face. He glowed from the contact with God.
 5. After leading the people 40 years as a self-sacrificing servant leader, they continually (10x) rebel.
 6. In one angry act he is shut out of the Promised Land!
- D. DANIEL LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH PAGAN TIMES Daniel 7:9-10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before

him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (KJV) Captivity, POW But listen to Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (KJV)

E. ZECHARIAH LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH DISASTER TIMES Zechariah 14:5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. (KJV) The mighty earthquakes of life, disasters unexpected, known only to God. And what was he saying? Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (KJV)

F. PETER AND PAUL LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH PRISON AND MARTYRDOM TIMES

1. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (KJV);

2. 2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (KJV);
 3. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (KJV)
- G. JOHN LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH LONELY TIMES Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (KJV)
He was the last Apostle, disciple, last Christian?
On a lonely island . . . Revelation 22:20-21 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (KJV)
- o Dedicated [2:9-11]