

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH – ELGIN, IL  
AFTERNOON SERVICE, SEPTEMBER 6, 1981  
**LAST SERMON AND RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**  
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HYMNS SUNG

I NEED THE PRAYERS  
HYMNS OF ZION, HYMN NO. 201

1. I need the prayers of those I love,  
While trav'ling o'er life's rugged way.  
That I may true and faithful be,  
And live for Jesus every day.

2. I need the prayers of those I love,  
To help me in each trying hour.  
To bear my tempted soul to Him,  
That He may keep me by His power.

Chorus: I want my friends to pray for me.  
To bear my tempted soul above.  
And intercede with God for me.  
I need the prayers of those I love

3. I want my friends to pray for me.  
To hold me up on wings of faith,  
That I may walk the narrow way,  
Kept by our Fathers glorious grace.

THE CHRISTIAN CROSS  
ZION'S HARP, HYMN NO. 252

1. The Christian's robe and badge of love  
It is the cross of Christ.  
And he who knows the worth there of  
Will bear it without sighs.  
Will bear it without sighs.

3. And should it pain, should it be sore,  
We still remain in faith;  
We know Whose Name we do adore,  
What in His Word He saith.  
What in His Word He saith.

2. We take it meekly, bear it true,  
And know it is our gain.  
We bear it not upon our breast,  
Oh, no, it is within.  
Oh, no, it is within.

4. We bear it but a little while,  
A pledge of things to come,  
Of garments glorious and white  
In that eternal home.  
In that eternal home

MY LIFETIME DOTH PASS AWAY  
ZION'S HARP, HYMN NO. 253

1. My life time doth pass away;  
Hourly to the grave I hasten,  
And I know each fleeting day  
My allotted span will lessen,  
Think, man, death comes soon or late,  
Tarry not, it will not wait!

6. Learn by faith to overcome,  
Saying, "My Redeemer liveth.  
With these eyes I'll see Him come

When eternal life He giveth."  
"It is finished," He did call,  
Triumphed over death and all.

7. Draw in spirit near the grave;  
Watch thy body slowly sinking,  
Pray: "O Lord, that I am Clay,  
Let my thoughts be daily thinking,  
Teach me, Father, ev'ry day;  
Make me true and wise, I pray. "

**OLD TESTAMENT MESSAGE**

The hymn that we just sang certainly gives us some sobering thoughts. Does it not, loved ones? When we think, that last moment, when we will close your eyes to this earth and then we can just visualize, now while we still have life and breath and understanding, watch ourselves be lowered into the grave. And how many-many times have we in our lifetime saw this when loved ones were lowered into the grave.

In latter times it seems like men try to remove some of the sting of death by not lowering the casket into the grave before our very eyes. But really they are cheating God out of impressing mankind how nothing we are. That we are only here but for a fleeting moment and then we shall go the way of all flesh.

How wonderful, how thankful we can be even as we were reminded this morning that we could believe this precious Word. That we could receive that gift of faith that God is so willing to share with everyone who would only come unto Him with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and that we might tremble at His Word. How thankful we are that He called us when He did. How thankful I believe that all of you beloved brothers and sisters are that He called you. And now we can all set here together again this afternoon even as this morning under the sound of God's Holy and Precious Word trusting that He might bless us. Bless us according to the needs of each and every heart.

We have opened the Bible here and will seek to read with the help and grace of God from chapter 12 in the book of Ecclesiastes.

ECCLESIASTES 12, KING JAMES VERSION (KJV)

1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and

all the daughters of musick shall be brought low;

5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

I want to stop there for just a moment beloved ones. When we talk about the Spirit that returns unto God who gave it, that is different. And so many people do not realize that He did not speak of the Soul here because the Soul will go where it has been ordained by how it has lived, how it has believed, how it has obeyed the Word of God. The Spirit shall return unto God but the Soul beloved ones will go to that place that has been prepared for it by their life here upon this earth, whether they have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they have repented for their sins, whether they have become converted and become children of God. And have been true and faithful until life's very end. Then it also can be well with their Soul.

8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.

9 And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

10 The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.

11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.

12 And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

And now let us listen

Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Those are sobering words are they not, beloved ones? And yet, also encouraging because it gives us here the conclusion of the whole matter and it gives us the solution: that we should fear God and keep His commandments knowing that this is the whole

duty of man here upon this earth who want to be forever with God and the Lord Jesus Christ in this life after death.

## HYMN

One of my favorite hymns. I would be very pleased if we could sing together hymn number 201, THE BOUNDLESSNESS OF GOD'S GRACE. And truly it is boundless, if we just humble ourselves and call upon Him for His help and guidance.

1. O, my Lord Jesus Christ!  
By grace I am apprised  
Of gifts esteemed;  
Filled with the Holy Ghost,  
Among Thy chosen host,  
I may now take my post,  
Ever redeemed, Ever redeemed!

And verse 5 & 6

5. Thy grace so rich and free,  
To me in high degree  
Thou dost unfold;  
Thou only, great and strong,  
Couldst break the dreadful throng,  
And raw from Satan's throng  
Into thy fold, Into thy fold.

6. Therefore my voice I'll raise  
In glad and joyous praise  
Now on this shore,  
And then in chorus clear  
I'll sing Thy praises near,  
O Lord, to Thy blest ear  
Forevermore, Forevermore.

Sing as you would choose from the beginning.

[VERSE 1 WAS SUNG – SEE ABOVE AND THEN THE FOLLOWING]

2. O, this redemption bond,  
It goes so far beyond  
My carnal view,  
Thy merciful nature  
Forever will endure,  
And Thy word doth assure  
Thy promise true, Thy promise true.

3. As Jesus died for me,  
And in the grave did lie  
So I the same,  
Immersed and buried there,

I'm resurrected where  
I no more death shall share,  
Praised be His name! Praised be His name!

4. The body that believes,  
Thy Son as head receives  
In union strong;  
So I, the scornful one,  
This membership have won,  
Since to the blessed Son  
I now belong, I now belong.

Lord it is all grace

## PRAYER

Once more dear Heavenly Father, dear Lord Jesus when we take our refuge on bended knee realizing what a holy and blessed privilege it is to come unto Thee with all our cares,

with all our needs, to make it know unto Thee all our wishes and all our desires. And we trust dear Father that our desires again this day, on every one of our hearts, to hear, to receive of Thee those things which are so important for the eternal wellbeing of our undying souls. Oh we can never thank Thee nor praise Thee enough for thy Holy Word which does lay out so clearly and so plainly everything for us to understand. To perceive and to be food and drink and nourishment for our inner spiritual man. To be a light upon our path and a lamp unto our feet as we traverse this sod upon this straight and narrow pilgrim pathway upon which Thou, the Lord has sent us.

We're so thankful, dear Father for the beautiful words that we could sing together in this hymn. We are so thankful to know that even years gone by, perhaps many years since these words were penned by faithful God fearing men or women, we do not know, but this we can appreciate and believe that they were Thy children to be able to express themselves; such beautiful words as we have been able to sing together. May we cherish such words dear ones and dear Lord as we traverse this sod and as we go onward and forward upon this pilgrim pathway before death calls us home.

We pray dear Father as we have once more assembled here this afternoon in Thy house of worship. We thank Thee for the blessed privilege that is ours that we can so unhindered and undisturbed assemble ourselves wherever and whenever we choose. To read Thy Word, to sing the beautiful, blessed hymns together which do encourage our hearts to live more faithful, more sincere. For Thee our Lord and most Holy God lifts calm out of the world of sin, turmoil, and unbelief into Thy marvelous light, truth, and salvation for which we can never thank Thee nor praise Thee enough dear Loving Father. Help us to appreciate it more and more as we come closer to the end of our days. And that we might seek by Thy grace to try more earnestly and more sincerely to be true and faithful unto Thee. Thou who has called us to such a heavenly calling that our human and finite minds can hardly grasp or comprehend how wonderfully Thou has dealt with us. Surely not as we have deserved but much rather according to Thy great love and Thy tender mercy for which we can never thank Thee nor praise Thee enough.

Now Dear Heavenly Father we humbly want to pray for our beloved church for which Thou are the Head, Lord Jesus that Thou would help each and every one of us that have been so fortunate as to become Thy child and Thy heir. That we would, every one of us try to be more faithful and become more sincere each and every day of our lives. To read Thy holy and precious Word each day and to live by It. That none of us would become a prey unto Satan, the crafty enemy of our soul who is ever looking about for a chance and opportunity to lead one of Thy children astray.

And so Dear Father we are so deeply concerned for our beloved church that Thou might preserve it even as Thy Bride; cleansed and purified, made white as snow, ready to receive Thee, Lord Jesus as the Bridegroom of the soul. When Thou will come in from Thy throne in heaven down here upon this earth to claim Thy Bride and to bring us all to that heavenly home.

Thanks and praise and honor and glory belongeth unto Thee who made it all possible. Thou who was willing to leave the glory of heaven and come down here upon this earth to bring us the Father's good Word and Witness. And then to live such an exemplary life for us to

follow after. That we do not have to grope about in darkness. But we have Thee, Lord Jesus as an example. We have Thy Word to teach us how we shall live and how we shall conduct ourselves in this life upon this earth that it might then once be well with our souls in all eternity.

Again, Dear Father we want to pray for our beloved brothers who labor with us here in the proclaiming Thy glorious gospel of truth and salvation. That Thou wouldst ever stand mightily by each and every one. That Thou wouldst ever encourage them to due diligence to speak Thy Word without fear of failing. And that it might always be, even as that manna from heaven to every hungry soul that wouldst come under the shadow of Thy wing and assemble with us in Thy house of worship.

Oh Dear Father, we have prayed for our beloved brother Nathan Thou hast chosen to shepherd this flock. Oh how we pray for him that Thou wouldst ever give him grace and Godly wisdom from above. That he might be able by Thy grace to carry out his duties to help the sheep and lambs. Whom Thou hast called and chosen. Whom Thou hast planned and purified and made mete for the Master's use. That he might realize Thou Lord Jesus art the Head and how the Loving Father in Heaven and He whose righteousness we should ever uphold in every way and every manner. So ever grant unto him all that is necessary that he might be able, by Thy help and grace, help every soul that would come to him, convicted of their sins. That he might find help, guidance, and words of wisdom to encourage them to work out the salvation of their souls. Help our dear brother upon whom such weighty responsibilities have been entrusted that whatsoever good he might do that he would give Thee, Dear Father the glory, the praise, and the honor. And that it would even be as a humbling for him to know that he has been used as a vessel in Thy hands to help some trembling soul to find their way into that everlasting peace and love.

So again, Dear Father, we humbly entreat Thee. Come Thou into our midst. Would Thou choose for us out of Thy Word, that which Thou wouldst have us to read and to meditate upon in this afternoon hour? Thou seeth to the depth of our each and every heart. Thou knowest what we are need of, so we commit ourselves all unto Thee. We would yet pray for those, Thy children who could not assemble with us on account of old age, infirmities of the flesh. Those who are in hospitals, rest home, nursing homes, wherever they might be. That Thou wouldst bless them, even as Thou the Father of all can bless.

And so we pray for our youth growing up in an age of troublesome and perilous times which we are living in. That our beloved brothers and sisters in Sunday school who have been entrusted with such a weighty duty and responsibility. To plant the seeds of truth in the hearts of our youth that might in due time take root and grow and bring forth fruit unto life eternal.

So we commit all things unto Thee. Thou knowest our every need, our every care, and so we would commit all things unto Thee. Believing and praying that Thou wouldst even bring us an afternoon blessing which Thou knowest that we are in need of.

We praise, honor, and thank Thee and ask Thee all favors Dear Heavenly Father. In the name of our dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen!

## NEW TESTAMENT MESSAGE

I happened to open up here so we'll seek to read our meditation this afternoon trusting that the Lord will provide us all teachings and blessings that'll be help to us, encouragement upon the pilgrim pathway that leads to that heavenly home.

### Acts of the Apostles Chapter 20:

1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves

Let's take notice of that beloved ones; also of your own selves

shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

And it's happened!

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

We are coming to the end of Paul's faithful ministry of the gospel of grace and salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And how wonderful it is beloved one ...TAPE BLANK FOR 15 SECONDS ... let Thy light shine round and about him that he fell upon his face and he said, "Who art Thou Lord?" And the Lord says, "I am Jesus whom thou persecuteth." And then Paul says, "Lord what wouldest Thou have me to do?" And Jesus didn't tell him \_\_?\_\_ but, "You go into the city into a street that is called Straight and there you will find a man by the name of Ananias and he will tell you all things that we want you to do." And Paul was obedient to that vision and he went into the city and found it just as the Lord had told him he would. He found this man Ananias was even on his way to meet him. And what was the first thing that Ananias did, he prayed and laid his hands upon his eyes that he might receive his sight. Paul had been stricken with blindness that the power of God might be revealed unto him. And such an impressive way that by being humbled, being obedient to the voice he went into the city and the first thing that Ananias did was to lay his hands upon his eyes that he might receive his sight.



And we all know, do we not beloved ones, how important it is that we can see even with these natural eyes that we can go about our duties. To carry out our work whatever it might be. These eyes are so very, very important to us. But oh how much more important is our spiritual vision that we might be able to comprehend, grasp, and to understand that it is with the eyes of faith that God is revealed unto us the Lord Jesus Christ. That we could believe on Him through His power of His Word when it was proclaimed even by humble brothers who do not think more of themselves than they ought to think. But because of their love for Jesus and because they have been called they also was willing to preach the gospel. Even as Paul then, when it was revealed to him by Ananias that he should go forth and preach the gospel unto the Gentiles. That he was a chosen vessel unto God to bring forth this glorious gospel unto the Gentiles. And so you and I beloved ones we have also become the fortunate recipients of this glorious gospel. Not as the Lord Jesus who came here upon this earth to preach the gospel to take away the sins of the world. Who would make them even as we heard this morning whiter than snow or even whiter than the wool.

And so you and I beloved ones have this wonderful experience. We who were sinners doomed to hell have been made whiter than snow. Children of God looking forward to that time and that day when Jesus will come again. Or if we should die, close our eyes to this world, that we might be lowered into the grave that than yet we shall know that there is a home awaiting in heaven. There is beloved ones a promise in God's Word. Did He not when He forgave us our sins and we felt His wonderful love and peace in our hearts. Did it not also give us a hope, a blessed and a living hope of a home in heaven when we leave this earth? He surely did. And it was so precious, so meaningful to us that we could think that there was a home in heaven awaiting us. That we were not going to be cast into hell with the unbelievers and those who do not obey the Word of God.

And so beloved ones let us become more appreciative. Let us become more sincere and more faithful serving our God, laboring together in love, in peace, in unity, and in one accord. That our Lord might be glorified and that it might be well with our souls in that long and never ending eternity.

Here we found that Paul was so filled with the Spirit that he preached even unto the middle of the night. And there was a young man there that evidently he became tired, weary, he fell asleep, and then he fell down from the third loft we read here. That's a long ways down to the ground. And everybody thought that he was dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him and he brought the young man alive and they were again comforted.

I believe beloved ones that so many of these things that's happened, that were only being accomplished through the power of God were to show unto the people the power of God. The power of God unto salvation to those who would believe and obey His Word.

And so, Paul went from there and evidently laid out places where he wanted to go. And he had appointed things and so he went on his way. He wanted to be sure that he would arrive at Jerusalem before the Day of Pentecost. The Day of Pentecost beloved brothers and sisters was that day when The Lord Jesus again revealed His mighty power. And they were assembled together there waiting for the Spirit to be shed abroad upon them and finally like as a light from heaven fell down even as lightning upon each of them and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. What a wonderful and what a precious occasion that must have been.

And then after that there was another miracle that happened. And people come around and they heard these people speaking the Word of God in their own language. Whatever land or country they had come from. No doubt they had heard about this day, this Day of Pentecost that was going to come to pass. And evidently there was many people there from many, we read it there in that chapter I believe fifteen or so different nations were represented there. And these brothers to whom the Lord had entrusted to minister this Word they were able to speak in the language that everyone that came from these various countries were able to understand. Isn't that marvelous and a wonderful thing.

Yes we can hardly grasp it but then after that had taken place it says that Paul went from Miletus, he went to Ephesus and there he called the elders of the church and he was on his way to Jerusalem. And then he explained to them, he told them how, you know from the first day that I came into Asia after what manner I been with you that all seasons serving the Lord with all humility of mind and many cares and temptations which befell me the lying in wait of the Jews. And we have a record do we not, how Paul was persecuted, how he was in prisoned, how he was three days in the deep, and beset with many sorrows, many disappointments. And yet he kept the faith. His God always helping that he might come up again and that he might go forth preaching the Gospel.

And now he was coming to a time when he wanted to go to Jerusalem to be there for this wonderful and blessed occasion, the Day of Pentecost. And we don't read anything that Paul was able to make, that at least, not to my knowledge. At this time I can't remember that we read anything that Paul being present where he wasn't able to make it or whether he just but nevertheless I believe he was there afterwards and him and Peter preached the Gospel unto those who came by and to inquire of them of that wonderful thing that had come to pass.

But let us loved ones remember this how Paul says it, how he served the Lord with all humility of mind. Beloved ones, if we want to be in God's service, we want to be his faithful children, we need to never forget the importance of being humble and childlike. The Lord Jesus Christ, when He was preaching the Gospel he took a little child He set it in the midst of them and He said except ye become humble as this little child ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now do we think beloved ones that only means during the time of our repentance; our conversion? Do you think that it means for the rest of our lives? I'm sure you know and believe that it means the rest of our life. That we should be humble and childlike, obedient to the Word of God.

Paul says here, and now behold I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me. But you see, he was faithful, he felt that it was God's will that he should be there and so he went on his way. But he said he did have this Holy Ghost witness in every city saying that there would be bonds and afflictions awaiting him. And there really was, we can read it here in the Acts of the Apostles of all the things that Paul had to endure. And finally he had to appeal unto Caesar and so for a purpose known unto God. That he was then, his appeal was granted him that he should go to Caesar and plead his cause

there. But Paul received it as an opportunity to go to Rome and preach the Gospel to those people in Rome also that a church might be started there in Rome.

Even as beloved have gone out to Colorado bringing the Gospel of Salvation to that small number out there; some perhaps not even so much interested. But as we read in the Letter to the Philippians that an opportunity might be given to hear the precious Word of God. And we know that the Bible tells us that one soul is worth more than all the world to God. He wants one soul to be saved is worth more than all the world, all the cost.

And so as they gathered together there by the sea shore and Paul testifying to them that he didn't know what was awaiting him there but only those things, that there was bonds and afflictions awaiting him. But he said these things didn't move him. He didn't count his life dear unto him. What he was mostly interested in and concerned about ... STATIC ... with joy and the ministry which he had received from the Lord Jesus Christ to testify the Gospel of Grace. This was his concern that he might not count his life dear unto him but that he might finish his course with joy preaching the Word of God which had been entrusted to him by the Lord Jesus Christ on the way to Damascus.

He says, "now behold I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take here to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men." What a wonderful thing beloved ones for Paul to be able to testify unto those who are with him that he had kept himself pure from the blood of all men. And that he had not shunned to declare unto them all the council of God.

And so we hope and trust that this Word might continue to be preached and that the service of God might continue. To take their calling their responsibility in all seriousness and in all earnestness to realize what a grave responsibility it is to bring forth this Gospel. That first and above all the sheep and the lambs of Jesus Christ might be fed and nourished and kept by the power and might of God upon the straight and narrow way upon which they have made a beginning. And then that precious souls who assemble with us, beloved friends, and hear the Word. That they also might be moved to pick up the cross and follow Jesus. To become His children and heirs. The glory of God and the salvation of their souls. He said take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God which He has purchased with His own blood.

Oh let us never forget, let us never forget the price that was paid for the redemption of our souls from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the power of darkness and that we could become children of God. Looking forward to that glorious day when we can then all be garnered into that Heavenly Home.

Paul expressed a warning here, "I know this that after my departure shall devious wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock." This happens, it seems like, from time to time. We're thankful it is not a continuous thing but from time to time there are deceivers even from amongst our own flock deceiving some of God's children. And so we want to encourage each and everyone, including myself, including all of us that we want to be diligent and watchful that no one will be able to deceive us or to lead us astray that we might miss the goal of our Heavenly calling in Christ Jesus.

He says, “even of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things,” that means contrary to the Gospel to draw away disciples after them. You see where pride, base person, when he thinks that he becomes more wise than those unto whom the oversight of the church has been entrusted or to the ministers take upon themselves to speak perverse things contrary to that glorious Gospel that you and I have believed in and which has brought peace unto our souls and a hope of a home in Heaven. Then Paul says, “therefore watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

And now brethren I commend you to God and to the Word of His Grace which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. So may it be so with us beloved ones and as I mentioned in the prayer and I read this just this past week in a letter that was handed to me of a loved one of like faith as ours who visited over in Switzerland and how an old woman in a nursing home there. They went to visit her and then they asked her, “What was most important to live a Godly and a successful life?” And she said, “Read the Word of God every day and live it.” Live according to it. Read the Word of God every day and live according to it.

This made such an impression on me I just wanted to share this with you beloved ones. If you don’t remember anything else remember this. How important it is for us to read the Word of God every day and to live by it. And to uphold the righteousness of God who has been so gracious and so merciful to call us out of the world of sin and darkness and unbelief into His marvelous light of truth and salvation. Let us never forget God expects this from us because He has paid such a tremendous price for our redemption from the power of sin and Satan that we could become His children. So let us always try to do that beloved ones. We who have been called as ambassadors of Christ here in this world and time. And we have been reminded over and over again. I believe we were reminded this morning of the love of Christ radiating from our faces that people in the world might even inquire of us of that hope that lieth within us.

And so beloved ones as ambassadors of Christ let us continue to uphold God’s righteousness in every way in every matter that He might be pleased with all of us.

Trust one of you brothers to speak.

ANOTHER MINISTER TALKED

READ VERSES 5-7 AND SANG VERSES 1-4 OF HYMN 74 IN THE ZION’S HARP -  
GOD’S DIVINE COMPASSION

A BROTHER PRAYED

ELDER NATHAN STEFFEN GAVE A VOTE REPORT REGARDING BUILDING THE  
RESTHOME (132 YES, 27 NO, 2 NEUTRAL, & 1 BLANK) AND THAN SAID: Now Brother  
Herman, our shepherd would like to speak to us all.

## RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Dearly beloved, brothers and sisters we read in the Bible there is a time and a place for everything. There is a season to plant and a season to harvest and I think you all know plants better than I do ... BLANK TAPE ... which was really not according to my faith. As I have prayed most fervently now as brothers have told us that they wanted to seek more help in the pulpit they asked the congregation to pray and I prayed most fervently that the Lord would choose for us, that He knew the brothers better than I did. And I just said Thy will be done. Then when I was chosen what could I do? I felt all I could say is Lord if this is Your will help me so I can preach Thy Word in all sincerity and earnestness.

So in looking back now over 31 years I must say that the Lord has been faithful even though we also acknowledge our great weakness. 11 years later our dear elder brother, Will Stettner who had now also become older now said the church should again earnestly pray and that one of the ministering brothers could be chosen to serve as the elder of the Elgin Congregation. Again this so great a responsibility fell upon me the weakest and most needy one of the three brothers. It has been 20 years now that I have tried most faithfully and sincerely to carry out the duties of the shepherd for our beloved congregation which has become nearer and more precious with each passing year. But the years have also taken their toll and I could feel this for some time already and had carefully and prayerfully considered retiring.

This last spring about a week or so after we came home from Texas Della and I were riding in our car together and everything was very quiet and all at once she said so quietly and humbly, "dad don't you think it's about time for you to give up your elder and minister duties?" I did not answer her because I had been thinking about this prayerfully for some time. But now much more seriously asking the Lord every day what His will was. And finally after several months of patiently waiting His answer I realized this was a very serious matter and I did not want to run ahead of our dear Lord and be too hasty.

As I was sitting in my chair resting one day a wonderful feeling of sweet peace came over my whole being and all I could do was thank God for answering my prayer so wonderfully. I did not share this with anyone but my dear wife and Brother Nathan whom the Lord had chosen about four years ago to help on the elder duties which I have been so thankful.

At Conference time I shared this all with the elder body. Even though they were shocked, after some thought and discussion they unanimously agreed that this must be the Lord's will. A few weeks ago the Lord has also chosen by His Spirit's guidance a dear young brother, Ronald Schambach to serve as a Minister of God's Holy Word.

So in as much as the Lord has filled the ranks I will as of today, September the 6<sup>th</sup> 1981 retire from all my Elder duties and Minister duties my dear beloved brothers and sisters trusting that you will also support me in this decision as you have so faithfully supported me in the past throughout my years of service.

God bless you. Thank you all for all your love and kindness and your undaunted support.