

**“Therefore”
(I Corinthians 15:58)**

Scripture Reading:

I Corinthians 15:58 “THEREFORE MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE YE STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.”

A couple of weeks ago Darwin gave us an excellent sermon from the latter part of I Corinthians chapter 15. Beginning at verse 51 Paul explains a mystery, describing the triumph of Christ over death, that we will all be changed, that all will be raised from the dead, resurrected from the grave and prepared for eternity. Then in verse 57 Paul gives thanks to God “WHICH GIVETH US THIS VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

This is followed in verse 58 by that word “THEREFORE.” It means that because of what was just written, in consequence of these facts, as a result of the victory that God has given us; there are things that we must consider, there are things that we must do. It is those things that we will study in this lesson.

Beloved Brethren

First of all we observe that the words of Paul are written to the church in Corinth and addressed to the “BELOVED BRETHREN”, the members of the church. So it is that this lesson will be primarily directed to those who are “BRETHREN”, those who are already members of the Lord’s body, the kingdom over which Christ rules. But who are they?

First of all we are the family of God. Just as the descendants of Israel had been chosen of God to be his children under the Mosaic Covenant, to be his family; Moses declares to them in

Deuteronomy 14:1 “YE *are* THE CHILDREN OF THE **LORD** YOUR GOD:...” **v.2** “FOR THOU *art* AN HOLY PEOPLE UNTO THE **LORD** THY GOD, AND THE **LORD** HATH CHOSEN THEE TO BE A PECULIAR PEOPLE UNTO HIMSELF, ABOVE ALL THE NATIONS THAT *are* UPON THE EARTH.”

The prophet Isaiah acknowledges that special relationship in his writing this way, speaking to God:

Isaiah 63:16 “DOUBTLESS THOU *art* OUR FATHER, THOUGH ABRAHAM BE IGNORANT OF US, AND ISRAEL ACKNOWLEDGE US NOT: THOU O LORD, *art* OUR FATHER, OUR REDEEMER; THY NAME *is* FROM EVERLASTING.”

Then in reminding Israel of the special benefits that they enjoyed as God’s children another prophet writes this:

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“WHEN ISRAEL *was* A CHILD, THEN I LOVED HIM, AND CALLED MY SON OUT OF EGYPT.” Hosea 11:1

That relationship was restricted to Israel, the descendants of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. What about us today?

The Apostle John writes in the beginning of his gospel that men today have the power to become sons of God. Observe, John writes about the Messiah, the Promised One; the Son of God:

John 1:1 “IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

Then John goes on to tell us that the one who was “THE WORD” made all things, that in Him is life and that He is the light of men. He came into the world that he had made but the world didn’t know him. Then he came to that peculiar people whom God had chosen:

“HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT.” John 1:11

This was the remnant of Israel, the Jews, and many rejected him. Then we find those precious words that tell us that we can also enjoy that same special relationship with God:

John 1:12 “BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM GAVE HE POWER [the right] TO BECOME THE SONS OF GOD, *even* TO THEM THAT BELIEVE ON HIS NAME:”

We exercise that power, or right by not being unequally yoked with unbelievers, by living in righteousness, in fellowship with God, by walking and living like we indeed are “THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD”, separating ourselves from the world. (**II Corinthians 6:14-17**) And then he gives us this promise: that God:

“...WILL BE A FATHER UNTO YOU, AND YE SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS, SAID THE LORD ALMIGHTY”. II Corinthians 6:18

Jesus Christ, the son of God assures us in his teaching:

“AND HE STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND TOWARD HIS DISCIPLES, AND SAID, BEHOLD MY MOTHER AND MY BRETHREN! FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, THE SAME IS MY BROTHER, AND SISTER, AND MOTHER.” Matthew 12:49-50

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As children of God, as brothers and sisters to Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, there is another privilege that has a value beyond the ability of the human mind to measure. We enter into a relationship that has a special inheritance because as:

“THE SPIRIT ITSELF BEARETH WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT, THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD: 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.” **Romans 8:16-17**

We inherit a place in heaven that we may be glorified together with Him, in heaven, to be with the Father forever. Because Paul’s words, recorded at the direction of the Holy Spirit are not only for benefit of the Corinthian church, but you and I as well. First of all he tells the Corinthians to be:

Steadfast, Unmovable

Listen carefully if you will because this may sound strange to your ears. But there is a place and time in our lives when we truly need to be hard-headed and stubborn. You would expect that out a Missourian wouldn’t you? Well, what do we mean by that? First of all let’s look at the words of Joshua spoke to Israel as he prepared to depart this earth:

Joshua 23:6 “BE YE THEREFORE VERY COURAGEOUS TO KEEP AND TO DO ALL THAT IS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW OF MOSES, THAT YE TURN NOT ASIDE THEREFROM, *to* THE RIGHT HAND OR *to* THE LEFT”

Keep the law; hang onto your relationship with God as his children. Give Him no reason to disown or turn away from you. Israel had a special temptation that they must endure and overcome:

Joshua 23:7-8 “THAT YE COME NOT AMONG THESE NATIONS, THESE THAT REMAIN AMONG YOU; NEITHER MAKE MENTION OF THE NAME OF THEIR GODS, NOR CAUSE TO SWEAR *by them*, NEITHER SERVE THEM, NOR BOW YOURSELVES UNTO THEM: BUT CLEAVE UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD, AS YE HAVE DONE UNTO THIS DAY.”

Israel didn’t do that, Israel didn’t cleave “UNTO THE LORD”; Israel didn’t remain steadfast and unmoveable, so God cut them off and destroyed them as a nation.

We have the same opportunity today. Paul in writing to the church at Galatia, calling them “THE CHILDREN OF PROMISE” gave them this exhortation:

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“STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE.”

Galatians 5:1

Paul was writing to the churches in Galatia about returning to the bondage of the Mosaic Law. But we can make the same application today about returning to the bondage of sin that we escaped when we became children of God. Because Christ made us free from the bondage of sin. We need to:

“ONLY LET YOUR CONVERSATION (manner of life) BE AS IT BECOMETH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST: THAT WHETHER I COME AND SEE YOU, OR ELSE BE ABSENT, I MAY HEAR OF YOUR AFFAIRS, THAT YE STAND FAST IN ONE SPIRIT, WITH ONE MIND TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.” **Philippians 1:27**

He encourages them to live their lives daily in such a manner that they would not be ashamed for Paul to know every event, every situation they encountered, every moment of their existence. So that their lives would be such as would be becoming to the gospel of Christ. Likewise we today must live a life whereby we would not be ashamed for God to know every event, every situation we encounter, every moment of our existence and that our manner of living be becoming to the gospel of Christ. We must because God not only knows our most secret moments but also our deepest thoughts. Jesus told his disciples and those who heard him:

Matthew 5:16 “LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN.”

As the apostle Peter brings his second epistle to a close he exhorts those “...THAT HAVE OBTAINED LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH WITH US THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND OUR SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST:” (**II Peter 1:1**)

II Peter 3:17 “YE THEREFORE, BELOVED, SEEING YE KNOW *these things* BEFORE, BEWARE LEST YE ALSO, BEING LED AWAY WITH THE ERROR OF THE WICKED, FALL FROM YOUR STEADFASTNESS.”

But, we say, “that isn’t easy”. Well that’s where the mindset comes in that we talked about a few moments ago. We need to focus our minds on our ultimate goal of heaven, anchor our feet in the strait way that Jesus taught us about and walk the way Josiah walked. Over 375 years after his ancestor David had died, after Judah had endured bad kings and good; after God had destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel we’re told that King Josiah:

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“AND HE DID *that which was* RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF THE **LORD**, AND WALKED IN ALL THE WAY OF DAVID HIS FATHER, AND TURNED NOT ASIDE TO THE RIGHT HAND OR TO THE LEFT.” **II Kings 22:2**

He was focused on his purpose, he set his mind, and he reigned over Judah as a good king for 31 years. Only two kings reigned longer that he did in the history of the southern kingdom of Judah.

Then we have Job. He walked steadfast and unmovable in the way of God and then he tells us how he did that:

Job 23:11-12 “MY FOOT HATH HELD HIS STEPS, HIS WAY HAVE I KEPT, AND NOT DECLINED. NEITHER HAVE I GONE BACK FROM THE COMMANDMENT OF HIS LIPS; I HAVE ESTEEMED THE WORDS OF HIS MOUTH MORE THAN MY NECESSARY *food*.”

Job placed more highly in his life, in his manner of living, the words of the mouth of God than the food that sustained his physical body. Could we do no less? Then we see Jesus whom Peter writes about in **I Peter 2:21** that he left “US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS.” Even when faced with the horrendous death of crucifixion:

Luke 9:51 “AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN THE TIME WAS COME THAT HE SHOULD BE RECEIVED UP, HE STEADFASTLY SET HIS FACE TO GO TO JERUSALEM.”

And Peter and John even when arrested, imprisoned, and then brought before the high priest and the Sanhedrin council stood steadfast and unmoveable:

Acts 4:19-20 “BUT PETER AND JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, WHETHER IT BE RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD TO HEARKEN UNTO YOU MORE THAN UNTO GOD, JUDGE YE. FOR WE CANNOT BUT SPEAK THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD.”

But these are only a few of those whom could testify in this regard, because the Hebrew writer tells us immediately following that great chapter on faith in:

Hebrews 12:1 “WHEREFORE SEEING WE ALSO ARE COMPASSED ABOUT WITH SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN THAT SO EASILY BESET *us*, AND LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US.”

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This can only be done with the single mindedness, the dedication to our purpose that Peter exhorted those “STRANGERS” that were scattered among the Gentile nations in:

I Peter 1:13 “WHEREFORE GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND, BE SOBER, AND HOPE TO THE END FOR THE GRACE THAT IS TO BE BROUGHT UNTO YOU AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST:”

And here he says that we will see the “REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST” in all of his glory seated at the right hand of God, ruling over His kingdom serving as the elder brother of the all of us who are the children of God. Yes, there is a place in our lives when we must be steadfast and unmoveable, or as some folks might say “hardheaded and stubborn.”

Next the apostle tells the Corinthian brethren something that a lot of folks try to avoid, we need to work, we need to:

Abound in the Work of the Lord

We’ll deal with the word abound in a few moments, first let’s look at some examples of the work that we are expected to do. We go back again to our old friend and example Job:

Job 29:14-16 “I PUT ON RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND IT CLOTHED ME: MY JUDGMENT **was** AS A ROBE AND A DIADEM. I WAS EYES TO THE BLIND, AND FEET **was** I TO THE LAME. I **was** A FATHER TO THE POOR; AND THE CAUSE **which** I KNEW NOT I SEARCHED OUT.”

Job served his people, he lived in righteousness, wore it like a garment, the good of his judgment stood out like a crown and a royal robe on a king why? It was an honor to him because he helped the blind, he was like feet to the lame, served the poor like a benevolent father and when he could see no other cause to work at he searched for those who were in need. We have a similar recommendation in the wisdom of Lemuel of the “VIRTUOUS WOMAN”:

Proverbs 31:20 “SHE STRETCHETH OUT HER HAND TO THE POOR; YEA, SHE REACHETH FORTH HER HANDS TO THE NEEDY.”

She was commended because she, like Job, stood ready to do whatever was needful to help others that were less fortunate or who did not enjoy the blessings of her abundance. Then in the New Testament we have the example of the Good Samaritan in **Luke 10:30-37** and Jesus tells us to “GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE.”

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But these works, while important, are not the only work that we are to do in our service to God. The work of the church and consequently the work of a Christian is three-fold; benevolence, which is what we’ve just touched on, edification, and evangelism.

Therefore the works in which we must abound include edification and evangelism. Regarding evangelism Jesus himself gave us our marching orders:

Matthew 28:19 “GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST:”

We are to go teach all nations. In the record penned by Mark:

Mark 16:15 “AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.”

We are to go “INTO ALL THE WORLD”, and preach to “EVERY CREATURE,” every living human. Because God has ordained:

“FOR AFTER THAT IN THE WISDOM OF GOD THE WORLD BY WISDOM KNEW NOT GOD, IT PLEASSED GOD BY THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING TO SAVE THEM THAT BELIEVE.” **I Corinthians 1:21**

We understand the charge to evangelize because we hear sermons about it often. Our responsibilities, our work doesn’t end there. We are to edify, that word means that we are to instruct, uplift, enlighten, and strengthen those that have believed. Jesus gave us this commandment as well; we are not only to preach that they might believe but we are to continue:

“TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU...” **Matthew 28:20**

Jesus did exactly that in his ministry. First of all consider:

Matthew 5:1-2 “AND SEEING THE MULTITUDES, HE WENT UP INTO A MOUNTAIN: AND WHEN HE WAS SET, HIS DISCIPLES CAME UNTO HIM: AND HE OPENED HIS MOUTH, AND TAUGHT THEM SAYING,”

What followed was the section of scripture that we call the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught everywhere he went, even after his resurrection, just walking along with two of his disciples Jesus:

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“...BEGINNING AT MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS, HE EXPOUNDED UNTO THEM IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.” **Luke 24:27**

In the Hebrew letter we have this warning:

Hebrews 5:12 “FOR WHEN FOR THE TIME YE OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS, YE HAVE NEED THAT ONE TEACH YOU AGAIN WHICH *be* THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE ORACLES OF GOD; AND ARE BECOME SUCH AS HAVE NEED OF MILK, AND NOT OF STRONG MEAT.”

Then someone says, I can't preach or teach, I just don't have the talent. It is true that we all can't be preachers, we can't all be teachers of a class or a group of people. But we have other talents and opportunities. I will submit to you that if you are a father, a mother, grandmother, or grandfather you not only have the ability to teach you have the responsibility to teach those in your family, especially those that you have brought into the world. You can talk to other people about God and Christ and their eternal destination in an informal setting. And there are many other things that any person can do as a work of a Christian. When Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was criticized for anointing the feet of Jesus with spikenard He defended her this way:

“SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD: SHE IS COME AFOREHAND TO ANOINT MY BODY TO THE BURYING.” Mark 14:8

“SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD”; I hope that Jesus can say that about all of us when he defends us as our advocate before the Father in judgment.

Finally to close this part of our study we are to “ABOUND” in our work for the Lord. The wise man wrote:

Ecclesiastes 9:10 ‘WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO *it* WITH THY MIGHT; FOR *there is* NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOEST.”

And the apostle Paul encourages us to be:

**“NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS; FERVENT IN SPIRIT; SERVING THE LORD.”
Romans 12:11**

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Do what you can do, do it with all your might. Whatever our duties, whatever our accomplishments, whatever works of the Lord, whatever good deeds we may do God knows, records and will remember them. As Jesus instructed John to write to the church at Ephesus:

Revelation 2:2 “I KNOW THY WORKS, AND THY LABOR, AND THY PATIENCE, AND HOW THOU CANST BEAR THEM WHICH ARE EVIL, AND THOU HAS TRIED THEM WHICH SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, AND ARE NOT, AND HAST FOUND THEM LIARS:”

We do all of these things because:

You Do Not Labor in Vain

God assures those whom Paul calls “BELOVED BRETHERN” that not only does he know our every deed, our every thought; he will reward those who do His works with blessings beyond our ability to comprehend. When we look into the schoolmaster, the Old Testament we see that God made and kept many promises to His children. First Abraham:

Genesis 22:17 “THAT IN BLESSING I WILL BLESS THEE, AND IN MULTIPLYING I WILL MULTIPLY THY SEED AS THE STARS OF THE HEAVEN, AND AS THE SAND WHICH **is** UPON THE SEA SHORE; AND THY SEED SHALL POSSESS THE GATE OF HIS ENEMIES;”

If we consider the physical world, as the father of the Israelite nation through Sarah, the Bedouins through Hagar and many of the Arabic peoples through Keturah; the seed of Abraham has indeed been multiplied greatly. But if we consider this verse in the spiritual realm and referring to Abraham’s spiritual children, the same family of God of which we are members, we can readily see that God did keep his promise and his seed is indeed as many as the stars of heaven. Then let’s consider Israel:

Deuteronomy 28:1 “AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, IF THOU SHALT HEARKEN DILIGENTLY UNTO THE VOICE OF THE **LORD** THY GOD, TO OBSERVE *and* TO DO ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY, THAT THE **LORD** THY GOD WILL SET THEE ON HIGH ABOVE ALL NATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

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Then let's look at the words of Psalms; David speaking of the prosperity of the godly:

Psalms 37:27-28 “DEPART FROM EVIL, AND DO GOOD; AND DWELL FOR EVERMORE. FOR THE **LORD** LOVETH JUDGMENT, AND FORSAKETH NOT HIS SAINTS; THEY ARE PRESERVED FOR EVER: BUT THE SEED OF THE WICKED SHALL BE CUT OFF.”

David again declaring his confidence in God to keep that which he has promised:

Psalms 62:8 “TRUST IN HIM AT ALL TIMES; YE PEOPLE, POUR OUT YOUR HEART BEFORE HIM: GOD *is* A REFUGE FOR US.”

Another:

Psalms 97:10 “YE THAT LOVE THE **LORD**, HATE EVIL: HE PRESERVETH THE SOULS OF HIS SAINTS; HE DELIVERETH THEM OUT OF THE HAND OF THE WICKED.”

Many of the promises made to God's children under the Mosaic Law pertained to their physical welfare as people or to the well being of the nation of Israel. But the promises of the blessings that the children of God will enjoy under the current dispensation pertain to our spiritual lives and our destiny for eternity.

The Son of God was sent into this world for one purpose. A purpose first promised to Mother Eve in **Genesis 3:15** when she was deceived and brought sin into this world; a promise that was renewed through hundreds of years through the words of the prophets and fulfilled in the words of the angel to his mother, Mary:

Matthew 1:21 “AND SHE SHALL BRING FORTH A SON, AND THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME **JESUS**: FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.”

Jesus in his teaching the Pharisee, Nicodemus, confirms his mission:

John 3:14-15 “AND AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE WILDERNESS, EVEN SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP: THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”

Then Jesus in his teaching at the Feast of the Dedication in Jerusalem assures us:

John 10:27-28 “MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE, AND I KNOW THEM, AND THEY FOLLOW ME: AND I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE; AND THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH, NEITHER SHALL ANY *man* PLUCK THEM OUT OF MY HAND.”

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And when he was “LIFTED UP” and shed his blood as a living sacrifice of redemption for our sins as Paul writes:

Romans 5:9 “MUCH MORE THEN, BEING NOW JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, WE SHALL BE SAVED FROM WRATH THROUGH HIM.”

We, as God’s children, are justified, we are sanctified, we are cleansed from our past sins and made ready to share his kingdom. If we follow the admonition given by Paul to the church at Thessalonica in **II Thessalonians 3:13** to not become “WEARY IN WELL DOING” we will be rewarded in eternity beyond the ability of our human minds to comprehend.

Jesus describes the judgment scene like this:

Matthew 25:34 “THEN SHALL THE KING SAY UNTO THEM ON HIS RIGHT HAND, COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.”

And we will be prepared for that judgment by being resurrected from the dead and changed from a corruptible body into an incorruptible body as Paul writes:

I Corinthians 15:52 “IN A MOMENT, IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, AT THE LAST TRUMP: FOR THE TRUMPET SHALL SOUND, AND THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED INCORRUPTIBLE, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED.”

But these blessings are reserved for those who seized the “POWER” or in the ASV “THE RIGHT” to become Sons of God (**John 1:12**). So the Apostle Peter tells us:

“WHEREFORE THE RATHER, BRETHREN, GIVE DILIGENCE TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE: FOR IF YE DO THESE THINGS, YE SHALL NEVER FALL: FOR SO AN ENTRANCE SHALL BE MINISTERED UNTO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.”
II Peter 1:10-11

Is your calling and election sure? Are you a child of God? If not, then you have made an election to spend eternity separated from God. You need to repent of your past sins (**Luke 13:3**); confess that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (**Acts 8:37**) and be baptized for the remission of your sins (**Acts 2:38**). Of if you are one of God’s children and you have failed in your diligence to maintain your relationship with Him and need to repent and seek his forgiveness you need to follow the example of Simon in **Acts 8:22**; repent and pray that you might be forgiven.