

## Grace, Grace and More Grace

By Henry Mahan

**Bible Text:** 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

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I read about a minister one time several years ago who was stricken ill, a severe heart attack. He was almost my age, in his late 40s. And lying there on the bed he said to a colleague, "If I ever get up off this bed I am going to have a Christ centered ministry."

Now, my friends, in the book of 2 Thessalonians we have a similar situation. The Thessalonians had been disturbed by false teachers who had come to them and were teaching that the coming of the Lord was at hand immediately. Christ was coming back and that right soon. And according to verse two these people were shaken in their minds and they were troubled, even had forged letters from Paul. Somebody had written letters to the church and forged Paul's name that the Lord was coming soon. And these people were shaken and they were troubled to the point that some of them were selling their businesses, they were quitting their jobs, they were interrupting their homes, they were side tracked from the grace of God and from the ministry of the gospel. They were taken up with this second coming to the point they were neglecting their first love. And this is easy to do.

And it doesn't have to be...it doesn't have to be a book. It doesn't have to be an attack on liberalism. It doesn't have to be prophecy. It doesn't have to be doctrine. We can become occupied. I can and you can. We can become occupied and that which occupies our talk and that which occupies our conversation and that which occupies our thoughts and that which occupies our activities to the point that the first love is forsaken, to the point that we are more taken up with this issue whether it be doctrine or whether it be the ordinances or whether it be a denomination or whether it be prophecy or whatever it might be or whether it be conservatism.

I think I can say that I am a conservative. The word liberal is not a bad word, though. I believe in liberal giving. But I do not want to be so taken up in my activities and in my thoughts and in my conversation to the point that I neglect that which God called me to do. And that is to preach Christ. And I don't want us to neglect, as a church, that which God called us to do and that is to exalt and magnify and worship and fellowship in and around the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul said that over and over again. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

And my message to you tonight is the message of Paul to the Thessalonians calling them back. Nothing wrong with prophecy in its rightful place. Nothing wrong with fellowship in its rightful place. Nothing wrong with ordinances and doctrine in its rightful place. Nothing wrong with these things. But calling us back, our minds and our conversation and our activities to the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

This is our first love. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.”

And, brethren, we encounter people every day for the last time and God forbid that our conversation and God forbid that our witness and God forbid that our message would be detrimental to their spiritual welfare rather than edifying.

I have preached so many messages from this pulpit and other places to people who in a short time after they heard that message went out to meet God. And we are those who must give an account not only this minister, but you, too.

Are our thoughts centered on Christ? Are our activities centered on Christ? Is our conversation Christ centered? Are our minds on Christ Jesus? Or have we been side tracked?

Now here are four tremendous themes of which Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, four tremendous themes of which he reminds these people, four tremendous themes on which and about which to rejoice and give thanks and put us back on the main track, put us back on the main line.

First of all in verse 13 of 2 Thessalonians two Paul begins this way. “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation.” God hath chosen you. That is my first theme. God hath chosen you, something about which to rejoice, something in which to rejoice, something that needs to be preached and proclaimed.

Now, my friends, let me make four statements about election. It is a word of which the apostles were not ashamed. Our Lord was not ashamed of it. The first statement about election is this. Election is true. It is true. He says here, “God hath chosen you. God hath chosen you.” It is true. If the people of God are called the elect then there must be an election. And the people of God in the Scripture are called the elect. Christ called them the elect.

Turn to Mark chapter 13 with me, Mark the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter. What I am saying is this, that if the people of God are called in the Scripture the elect, then election must be true. And Christ called them the elect. He says in Mark chapter 13, verse 20. “And except that the Lord had shortened those days no flesh should be saved. But for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.”

Now, look at verse 22. “For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”

Now, verse 27. “And then shall he send his angels and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”

Now turn to Luke chapter 18. Our Lord calls his people the elect. There are three times he refers to them as the elect. And here in Luke chapter 18, verse seven, our Lord speaking again, “And shall not God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them?”

In the book of Colossians Paul says, “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God bowels of mercy.”

In Titus the apostle Paul says, again, “Paul, a servant of God according to the faith of God’s elect.”

Peter says in his book, “Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God.”

John uses the word frequently. John says, “The elder to the elect lady.” Again he wrote, “The Church at Babylon elected together with you.” And, again, he said, “The elect sister.”

These men were not ashamed of that word. I don’t know why, as a minister of God, that I should stand up here and when I use the word elect put my hand over my mouth so that nobody knows what I am saying. I don’t know why I should apologize for a word that is used over and over and over again in God’s Word. It is used a whole lot more times than born again used, many more times.

Our Lord said in John 15:16 to his disciples, this is just before he went to the cross in John chapter 15, verse 16. He said to them, “You have not chosen me. I chose you. You didn’t chose me.” Brethren, we chose him because he chose us first. We sought him because he sought us. We love him because he loved us. “You didn’t choose me,” Christ said. “I chose you.”

And then, here in John 15:19 he says, “If you were of the world the world would love his own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world therefore the world hateth you.”

And then in John 17, if you will turn over there. Here is our Lord’s great high priestly prayer. Six times, no less than six times in this one prayer, no less than six times he refers to his people as “those whom the Father hath given me,” six times. He says it in verse two, “Thou hast given him, the Son, power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” In verse six he says, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.” He says in verse nine, “I

pray for them. I pray not for the world. I pray for them which thou hast given me.” In verse 11 he says in the latter part, “Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast give me.” Verse 12, “While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name, those that thou gavest me.” And then in verse 24, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.”

Now, if you will turn back to the book of John, chapter six, in John chapter five it is, John the fifth...John the sixth chapter. And you want to know the will of God? The Lord Jesus Christ tells us what the will of God is. He tells us why he came to this earth. He tells us what his mission was, what his task was to perform. In John chapter six, verse 38 he said, “I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is his will.” Now, that ought to get anybody’s attention that has any interest in spiritual things at all. “I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is his will that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

Now whether we are preachers or whether we claim to be believers or church members, deacons, elders, whatever we are, I am not ashamed of the gospel. I am not ashamed of the grace of God. I am not ashamed of the purpose of God. I am not ashamed of the Word of God. And I intend with all my heart to preach it and keep back nothing profitable unto you. And election is true. Now, it is true.

And Paul said in Acts 13:48, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” And I want you to listen to a Scripture over in John 10.

You say, “I don’t like that. I will not have that.”

Well...

“I will not believe that.”

You turn to John 10. There are some more folks who said that, too. In John chapter 10, verse 24. “Then came the Jews round about him and they said to him, ‘How long are you going to make us doubt?’” John 10:24, “‘If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ And he said, ‘I told you and you didn’t believe me. The works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But you believe not because you are not of my sheep. That is why you don’t believe. As I said unto you, my sheep will hear my voice.’”

Somebody told Roland Hill one time, he said, “You believe in election so strongly, why don’t you just preach to the elect.”

He said, “If you will put a mark on their back I will. I don’t know who they are, but I know they are. I don’t know where they are, but I know they are. I don’t know when they will come, but they will come. And I don’t know when they will hear the gospel, but they will hear it. They will hear it because election is true.”

And not only is it true, but look back at the text. He said, “God hath from the beginning chosen you.” Election is eternal. It is true, not a question about it. It is true. And, secondly, election is eternal. “I thank God for you, beloved, brethren, because God hath from the beginning, from the beginning...” Can you tell me when the beginning was? Can you tell me when the beginning was?

I think I can tell you when it was. Turn to John chapter one. This is all the information I have on it right here. In John chapter one it says, “In the beginning,” just like it does in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word.” That is Christ. “And the Word was with God and the Word was God and the same was in the beginning with God and all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.” And that is when he chose me, in the beginning, before the creation of this world, before the creation of the heavens, before the creation of Adam. That is when he chose me, in the beginning.

“God hath from the beginning chosen you.”

Now watch this. Election, thirdly...it is true, it is eternal and, thirdly, it is personal. God hath chosen you.

Somebody said, “I believe what God chose are nation, but not people.”

What are nations, but people? Nations are made up of people. You can’t have a nation if you haven’t got people. God hath chosen you.

He says to Jeremiah...turn to Jeremiah chapter one. Listen to this. In Jeremiah chapter one he says this, verse five, “The Word of the Lord came to me saying,” verse five, listen, “Before I formed you in the belly I knew you. I knew you.”

Now, brethren, this word here, “I knew you,” is that intimate, personal relationship, that love of—as old timers used to say—complacency, that love of acceptance. “Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee.”

He said to those people at the judgment in Matthew 7:22, “I never knew you.”

Now wait a minute? The Lord of glory knows everything. Yes. He knew their birth. They couldn’t have been born without him. He knew their lives. He knew their death. He knew their destiny, but he didn’t know them. And he meant by that he never knew them in that personal, intimate, redeeming way. But he said, “Jeremiah, before you were ever formed in the belly there was, between me and you, a covenant relationship. I knew you. I knew you. And before you came out of the womb I set you apart. I sanctified you and ordained you, a prophet to the nations. I knew you.”

Paul says in Galatians chapter one...turn over there with me, Galatians the first chapter. Paul was, what, about 40 years old, when God brought him to a knowledge of the gospel. Paul was over 40 years of age when he came to a knowledge of Christ, when he was, as we say, saved, when he came to know the Redeemer. But he was God’s child long before

then. He says in Galatians one, verse 15, “When it pleased God,” and that is when you are going to be saved when it pleases God. “When it pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb.” Paul said, “When I was killing Christians I was one of God’s own. When I was spewing out the name of Christ with the greatest hatred I was one of God’s own. When I was going up and down the country trying to annihilate the name and influence of Jesus Christ, I was one of God’s own because he separated me from my mother’s womb. And it pleased him to call me by his grace.”

Election is personal, personal.

Now, turn with me to the book of Romans. In the book of Romans, chapter nine. And there has been a lot of battles fought and a lot of blood shed over this, but it is still in God’s Word. It is still in God’s Word and God give us ministers and pastors and teachers with enough courage and enough boldness and enough concern for the glory of God and less concern for their salaries and their fame and their popularity to preach God’s Word.

In Romans nine it says here in verse 10, “And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even our father Isaac, the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but him that calleth. It was said to her, ‘The elder shall serve the younger.’” That is God’s decree. That is God’s decree. “As it is written, ‘Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’”

Now, what do you have to say to this? You had better be careful. Somebody says, “There is unrighteousness with God.”

Paul said, “God forbid.”

He said to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth.” We are born not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man. It is not of him that willeth. It is not of him that runneth. It is of God that showeth mercy. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation is of the Lord from beginning to end. He is the author and finisher of our faith. Faith is a gift of God. Repentance is a gift of God. Salvation is of the Lord in its planning and in its ultimate perfection and everything in between. And it is personal.

And then turn back to the text. Now, listen to this. And Paul rejoices in it. Every time you find Paul preaching on election he is rejoicing. Election is not your enemy. It is your friend. Without it nobody would be saved. Election is not your enemy. You had better thank God he did choose you. You never would have chosen him. You had better thank God he did call you. You never would have called. Everybody in this world is going to hell if he can. That’s right. Do you know anybody who is seeking the Lord? I don’t.

And then in the last place election is true, no question about that. It is true. It is like one preacher said not too far from here. "I believe it. But if I preached it I would split my church."

That's the first sermon I would preach the next Sunday morning. I would like to know who God's people are, wouldn't you? The first sermon. And that is not being obnoxious. That is just being honest. If something in this Word will offend you, then I have got...I owe it to your soul to preach it to you.

Like I said to one of my dearest friends, "I want to be your friend. And I am asking you to let me be your friend, but I didn't ask you to let me be your preacher. God made me your preacher. God made me your preacher. I didn't ask you to let me be your pastor. God made me your pastor. And my first obligation is to preach this Word whether it offends, whether it hurts and whether it drives everybody away." It is true.

And election is eternal. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Chosen in him before the foundation of the world." God almighty says he declares the end from the beginning saying, "My counsel shall stand. I will do all my good pleasure."

And then election is personal. God chose people. He wrote some names in the Lamb's book of life. He didn't write numbers. He wrote names. He didn't write down and say, "It is going to be a whole lot of people here." He wrote down who they were. Moses called it "the book which thou hast written." John called it in the book of Revelation, "The book of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world."

And then election...turn back to 2 Thessalonians. He said, "God hath chosen you. God hath from the beginning chosen you. And God hath chosen you to what? Well, a lot of folks want to make it read "to service," but that is not what it says. It says "to salvation." That is what it says. It says, "God hath chosen you to salvation, redemption, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, a vital union with Christ." That is what he has chosen you to. And this election always produces that results.

Watch these two statements here. "God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." My friends, there are two infallible marks of election. You want to make your calling and election sure? I'll tell you what the two infallible marks are: sanctification and faith. Those are the two marks of election.

First of all, every elect person who is chosen by the Father, who is redeemed by the Son, who is called by the Spirit receives spiritual life, receives spiritual hunger, receives spiritual graces, receives spiritual holiness; every child of God whom God saves. If you claim to be one of the elect and you are not holy, you are not one of the elect. If you claim to be one of the elect and you are not sanctified by the Holy Spirit you are not one of the elect.

“If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. If any man hath not the fruit of the Spirit, he is none of his. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, humility, meekness...” All these things are fruits of the Holy Ghost who dwells within us. And we grow, day by day, in those graces and in that fruit.

And then every elect person, secondly, believes the truth. He believes the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. He believes the Word of God. I can stand here in this pulpit and preach to him anything in this book. And he will sit there, though wounded by it, though cut by it, though convicted by it, he will sit there and say, “Amen, I believe that. I love it, too. I love it.”

Christ said, “There are two marks of my sheep. They hear my voice and they follow me.” He brands them on the ear and he brands them on the foot. And they hear his Word and they love it. And they believe it. And they walk in his footsteps. And his commands are their love. That is what...exactly what they want to do. They want to do what God says. They don’t seek the counsel of men. They don’t seek the counsels of men. They seek the counsel of God.

What does God say? What does the Lord say? I want to do what the Lord wants me to do. Thy will be done, not my will.

The essence of sin and the essence of holiness...now we talk a lot about holiness. The essence of sin is found in the first sin when Satan said five times, “I will be like God. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will. I will. I will.” That is sin. That is the basis of sin.

I know today preachers have cut it up into certain things. If you do this you sin. If you do that you sin. If you do something else you sin. You don’t have to do anything to sin, not a thing in this world. You can sit in a wheelchair paralyzed from the neck down and sin because sin is a will. It is my will. It is what I want to do. It doesn’t matter what God wants. It is what I want to do. That is sin.

Do you know what the essence of holiness is? Christ prayed it in the garden of Gethsemane when he said, “Not my will, but thy will be done.” I don’t care what it costs. I don’t care how it hurts. Thy will be done. Now, that is holiness. And you can cut it up into picture shows and smoking and playing cards or anything you want to cut it up into, but you are not within spitting distance of sin or holiness, either one. That’s right. Sin is a will. The human will against the divine will. And holiness is submission to the divine will. And that takes place in here.

I got amused one time when a fellow asked me, he said, “I wonder how Moses was so holy when he didn’t have any picture shows not to go to.”

That’s a good question, isn’t it?



All right, here is the second theme. And I have been too long on that one. But let me get on the next one. Verse 14. God hath chosen you. Isn't that a grand and glorious scene? Thank God. That is something to talk about. That is something to rejoice in. That is something to preach about. That is something to get happy about. God hath chosen me.

Pass me not, oh gentle Savior, hear my humble cry. While on others thou art calling, don't pass me by." Don't leave me to myself. That is all God has to do to send you to hell, just leave you alone. He will leave you alone, that's all. It's not a matter of whether you are elected to heaven or elected to hell, if God just leaves you alone you will go to hell because you are a child of hell. That is what the Scripture says. Just leave you alone. Just leave you to yourself.

And I am talking about you believers. All God has to do to put you on a shelf, just leave you alone. You will wind up there. Just leave you alone. Just leave you to your thoughts which are not his, leave you to your ways which are not his, leave you to your wisdom which is not his, just leave you alone. And you will wind up on a scrap heap. I guarantee you. And I am talking about myself, too. What I say about you I say double about me.

All right, verse 14. Here is another grand theme. God hath called you. Now, brethren, I want you to listen to these four statements. Election is not salvation. Election is unto salvation. Secondly, election is not the Savior. I am not saved because I am elect. I am saved because Christ died for me. Now don't you ever forget that. Don't you make a god out of election. Christ is the Lord. Don't even make this great theme, don't even make it a toy with which you are amazed or amused. Election is not the Savior, Christ is.

And let me remind of the third thing, that men are not forced into the kingdom of God. They come willingly. "Whosoever will let him take the water of life. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." There is not any man who is going to heaven against his will.

Just as when Noah finished that ark God said, "Noah, come into the ark." He wasn't pushed in, shoved in, dragged in. He went in just as willingly as those people stayed out. And anybody that wanted to could have gone in. And anybody here who wants to be saved can be if you want to.

I don't have any trouble with "Whosoever will." My problem is with all these whosoever won'ts around here. They won't. Christ said, "You will not come to me that you might have life. Come unto me. I will give you rest. I am the door. If any man enter in he shall be saved, any man. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." I guarantee you.

Men are not forced into the kingdom of God. They are not saved whether they want to be or not. Anybody who is saved wants to be. He wills to be. He desires to be.

And let me remind you of the fourth thing. Our Lord has no unbelieving people. I heard a preacher say on the radio from Cincinnati a few years ago, Doris and I were riding

down the highway listening to him preach. And he said this and both of us know he said it because she turned to me and said, "Is that what he said?"

I said, "That is what he said."

He said, "I want to comfort all of God's little children who have loved ones who died without hearing or believing the gospel. If they are one of the elect, they will be in heaven."

There ain't a word of truth in that. That is not so. No man is going to heaven who didn't hear the gospel. And no man is going to heaven who didn't believe the gospel. And no man is going to heaven who didn't love the gospel. And no man is going to heaven who didn't receive the gospel because the gospel is Christ. And that is saying a man can be saved without Christ. And that is not so.

"This is eternal life, that they might know thee and thy Son. He that hat the Son hath life. And he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how are they going to call on him in whom they haven't believed? And how are they going to believe on him of whom they haven't heard? And how are they going to hear without a preacher? And how in the world are they going to preach if God doesn't send them?" Romans 10:13-16...15.

He says here, "God hath from the beginning chosen you," but verse 14 says, "he called you by our gospel, by our gospel." Just like he called Matthew, "Follow me," just like he called Peter, James and John, just like he called Zacchaeus, just like he called Paul. "God hath chosen, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And anybody who doesn't believe is not going to be saved.

And I will tell you something else. The Holy Spirit is the agent of the new birth. The Word of God is the seed. The Word of God is the seed. And that Word is Christ. "Of his own will begat he us through the Word of truth." And a man does not have spiritual life who hasn't heard the gospel, impossible, impossible. Christ is life. You can't have life without Christ.

And look at 1 Thessalonians chapter one. Listen to this. 1 Thessalonians chapter one, verse four. Now listen to this carefully. "Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God." Oh, that is what I want to know. Am I one of the elect? Huh? That is what I want to know. It is true. And it is eternal and it is personal. And you can know it.

How do you know it, Paul?

Because our gospel, the gospel of Christ's incarnation, the gospel of Christ's perfect obedience, the gospel of Christ's sacrificial death, his substitutionary work on that cross in our place and in our stead, bearing our sin. Christ being buried and rising again the third day. Christ our mediator at the right hand of God. That is the gospel. It is Christ. And it didn't come to you in word only.

That is what scares me to death. I don't want people I preach to just to hear some words. I don't want them to memorize some doctrine. I want it to come to them in power, life giving power, regenerating power, awakening, quickening power. Our gospel came to you in power. It came to you in the Holy Ghost. It came to you in much assurance. It was the living Word. That is how it came to you.

And then Paul says, "That is how I know you are saved and that is how I know you are one of the elect."

Now turn back to the text. Let me give you a third theme. 2 Thessalonians 2, he said, "God hath chosen you." And secondly he said, "God called you." And I must be brief, but in verse 16 watch this. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself..." Oh, my, himself. Christ himself. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself. "And God even our Father hath loved us." Oh, think of it. God loves me.

I can imagine him loving the old prophets, Jeremiah whose eyes were rivers of tears; David, beloved, gallant, bold, brave, affectionate. I can imagine him loving Elijah and Elisha and Moses. Oh, Moses. How wonderful. I can imagine him loving the apostles, Peter and James and John. I can imagine him loving some of those old reformers like Calvin and Luther and Whitefield and Zacchaeus and those men who died for what they believed. But our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God even the Father loved us, us, Paul said, you Thessalonians, you Ashlanders, you Yankees. God loved you. God loved you. God loved you. Even Christ himself.

And it is more than pity. You can pity a stranger. It is more than mercy. You can have mercy on a beast. It is more than benevolence. You can give charity to people you have never seen. This love is a personal, discriminating, intimate, particular, fervent, unchangeable, everlasting love. You never have loved anybody like God loves you. You are incapable of loving like God loves you.

We are supposed to love each other as God loved us. We are supposed to forgive as God forgave us. We are supposed to be kind as God was kind to us.

Charles Spurgeon said, "The love of God for me is a fitter theme for contemplation than for explanation."

The love of God is to be felt. It can't be defined. Who can speak of his mighty love? In what language can I sing of its sweetness? Love must be felt in the heart. It can never be learned from the dictionary. The love of God must be shed abroad in the heart. It can never be memorized in the head. God loves me.

How can I not love even the most unlovely, huh? If God could love me in all my wretchedness and all my rebellion, if God can set his love upon me in that while I was yet a sinner, an enemy, why can't I love other people? Maybe I can't because I have never really seen his love for me.

Now, look at verse 16. God hath chosen us. God hath called us. God hath loved us. And, verse 16, and he hath given us everlasting consolation. Brethren, run over in your mind some of this consolation. This is what I like to talk about. It is what I like...I love to preach about this. I love to talk about it. I love to think about it. God hath forgiven all my sins because Christ died in my stead. My sins are all forgiven. Happy is the man to whom God will not charge sin. Happy is that man. And how can I get down in the doldrums of depression when God has forgiven all my sins? And God loves me and he will never change in that love.

“Having loved his own he loved them to the end,” the Scripture says. And the promises of God to me do not depend on my faithfulness. The promises of God depend on my position in Christ and the merits of his Son. And this is something I have to tell...I had to tell myself this this afternoon. I got real upset. All things work together for my good. I have his Word for that. I don’t care what it is.

Now, that ought to make me happy. And that ought to give me consolation and comfort. And I can cast all my care on him. He cares for me. He cares for me. I can come boldly before his throne any time I want to through a rent veil and I can talk to my Father.

And then he says he has given us consolation and a good hope, a good hope. And when I die I am going to wake in his likeness and my eternal, immortal soul shall join my resurrected body and I am going to be like Christ. That good hope is in his grace. Do you see it there? He hath given us a good hope. And the word “through” is “in...in grace.” Not in my merit, not in my works, not in my righteousness, in grace. Grace, grace and more grace.

*Our Father, thank you for your Word. Thank you for the comfort, consolation of your Word. Thank you for the correction of thy Word, the conviction of thy Word. It smites us, humbles us and strips our old self righteous rags from off us, knocks our foundation of flesh out from under us. But, oh what a resting place, what a soft, soft bed in which to lie, the Word of God.*

*We thank thee for the promises in Christ. Thou hast chosen us. Thou hast loved us. Thou hast called us and thou hast given us everlasting comfort. Friends can come and say kind words, but after they are gone, we are alone. But thy Word will never leave us. These promises never leave us. And we have a good hope as good as the throne of God, as good as the purpose of God, as good as the Word of God, a good hope in grace. And we can say with David, “I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”*

*Thank you, Lord, for saving our souls. Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.*