

"Serving God in Tough Times"

First Thess 2:1-12

(52-10)

Cripple him, and you have a Sir Walter Scott. Lock him in a prison cell, and you have a John Bunyan. Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge, and you have a George Washington.

(In a small prayer book written when he was about twenty years old Washington implored: "O most glorious God ... remember that I am but dust, and remit my transgressions, negligences and ignorances, and cover them all with the absolute obedience of thy dear Son, that those sacrifices (of sin, praise and thanksgiving) which I have offered may be accepted by thee, in and for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered upon the cross for me.... Direct my thoughts, words, and work; wash away my sin in the immaculate blood of the Lamb; and purge my heart by thy Holy Spirit.¹) Raise him in abject poverty and you have an Abraham Lincoln.

1. Strike him down with infantile paralysis, and he becomes Franklin Roosevelt.
2. Burn him so severely that the doctors say he'll never walk again, and you have a Glenn Cunningham-who set the world's one-mile record in 1934.
3. Deafen him and you have a Ludwig van Beethoven.
4. Have him or her born black in a society filled with racial discrimination, and you have a Booker T. Washington, a Marian Anderson, a George Washington Carver ...
5. Call him a slow learner, "retarded," and write him off as un-educable, and you have an Albert Einstein.

Hoping in the God of Grace: In their² book *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made*, Paul Brand and Phil Yancey quote from the novelist Frederick Buechner, who wrote: Who could have predicted that God

1. would choose not Esau, the honest and reliable, but Jacob the trickster and heel,
2. that He would put the finger on Noah, who hit the bottle,
3. or on Moses, who was trying to beat the rap in Midian for braining a man in Egypt and if it weren't for the honor of the thing, he'd just as soon let Aaron go back and face the music, or the prophets, who were a ragged lot, mad as hatters most of them ...? the exception seems to be the rule.
4. The first humans God created went out and did the only thing God asked them not to do.
5. The man He chose to head a new nation known as "God's people" tried to pawn off his wife on an unsuspecting Pharaoh.

¹ William J. Johnson, *George Washington, the Christian* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1919), pp. 23-28.

² (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980, pp. 29-30).

6. And the wife herself, when told at the ripe old age of ninety-one that God was ready to deliver the son He had promised her, broke into rasping laughter in the face of God.
7. Rahab, a harlot, became revered for her great faith.
8. And Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, went out of his way to break every proverb he so astutely composed.
9. Even after Jesus came the pattern continued. The two disciples who did most to spread the word after His departure, John and Peter, were the two He had rebuked most often for petty squabbling and muddleheadedness.
10. And the apostle Paul, who wrote more books than any other Bible writer, was selected for the task while kicking up dust whirls from town to town sniffing out Christians to torture. Jesus had nerve, in trusting the high-minded ideals of love and unity and fellowship to this group.
11. No wonder cynics have looked at the church and sighed, "If that group of people is supposed to represent God, I'll quickly vote against Him." Or, as Nietzsche expressed it, "His disciples will have to look more saved if I am to believe in their Savior."

How³ wonderful that God is more gracious than men. God never excuses disobedience, unfaithfulness, or any other sin. But He will forgive every sin that is placed under the atoning death of His Son, Jesus Christ. Position, prestige, or possessions give no advantage with Him, and lack of those things gives no disadvantage. As Peter learned only after much resistance to the idea, "God is not one to show partiality" (Acts 10:34; cf. 1 Pet. 1:17). In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28).

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

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

- I. **FEARLESS** [2:1] And that is what he taught every group he ministered to!
 - A. **PURPOSEFUL**: promised by the Lord, a life of hardship Acts 9:16
 - B. **RESILIENT**: driven out of a city only to minister in the next Acts 13:50-51; 14:5-7, 19-21.
 - C. **FEARLESS**: whipped, beaten, stoned and left for dead Acts 14:19-20
 - D. **STEADFAST**: public assault and beating Acts 16:19-24; 21:27
 - E. **PEACEFUL**: constant danger of renewed injury from bitter enemies Acts 20:23

³ MacArthur, John F., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, (Chicago: Moody Press) 1983.

- F. **FOCUSED:** unswerved by tearful warnings from close friends Acts 21:13
Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (NKJV)
- G. **UNWAVERING:** faithful to old age in serving God Acts 28:17. [Psalm 92:11]
- H. **UNDAUNTED:** An unbelievable list of untold months of hardship and pain II Cor 11:23-27.
- I. **UNSTOPPABLE:** unmoved by personal weakness 2 Corinthians 12: 10
Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (NKJV)
- J. **UNOFFENDABLE:** unappreciated by those he deeply invested in Galatians 1:6; 4:14-20. [Ps 119:165]
- K. **UNEARTHLY:** giving up personal safety, pleasure and pursuits for the advancement of God's kingdom Phil. 1:20; 3:8. [Revelation 17:8]
- L. **UNATTACHED:** unafraid of losing all that is precious on earth Philippians 2:17 Yes, and if I am being poured out [as a drink offering] on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. (NKJV)
- M. **UNDISCONTENTABLE:** Philippians 4:18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things [sent] from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. (NKJV)
- N. **UNYIELDING:** deserted by all friends in ROME 1 Timothy 4: 10, 16; 2 Timothy 4:17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and [that] all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. (NKJV)

II. **GENUINE** [2:3] They had experienced the **DOCTRINE OF SALVATION**⁴ Some years ago a man in a penitentiary studied a Moody correspondence course. He found Christ. In answer to one of the questions which gave him an opportunity to express where he stood in relation to his newfound faith, he wrote down: "I am a new man in an old body." It was a most perceptive remark. For that is what salvation is. But it will go even further than that saved prisoner realized. One day he will be a new man in a new body.

- A. **REPENTANCE: A CHANGE OF MIND** Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: (KJV)
- B. **REGENERATION: A CHANGE OF HEART** John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (KJV)
- C. **CONVERSION: A CHANGE OF LIFE** Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)
- D. **ADOPTION: A CHANGE OF FAMILY** Romans 8:14-17 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children,

⁴ Phillips, 100 New Testament Outlines, #100.

- then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. (KJV)
- E. SANCTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR Hebrews 10:14-16 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; (KJV)
- F. JUSTIFICATION: A CHANGE OF STATE Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (KJV) ILLUSTRATION: "justified" In popular, everyday language the word can be paraphrased: "just as if I'd never sinned!" Some years ago a wealthy Englishman bought a Rolls Royce car and took it to France on his vacation. It broke down. At great expense the factory flew out a mechanic and not only repaired the car but entertained the customer in the best available hotel. When he arrived home he expected to receive a large bill but none came. Eventually he wrote, asking for his account to be rendered. He received this reply: "Dear Sir, We have no record of anything ever having gone wrong with your car." That is exactly what it means to be justified. It means that God has no record of anything ever having gone wrong in our lives.
- G. GLORIFICATION: A CHANGE OF PLACE John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (KJV)

III. Honest [2:5]

This, of course, has had a doleful effect on the virtue of truth-telling⁵. If you cannot know the truth, if truth is only what you subjectively think, how can you tell the truth? Besides, lying is of little consequence if all knowledge is subjective opinion.

Of course, lying is not new. People have always managed very well in its practice. But the prevailing skepticism regarding truth has made it so much easier and acceptable.

Thus, the post-Kantian twentieth century has become the century of the great lie. Slogans and propaganda (which bypass reason) have become the tool for intellectual and political dominance. The Communist movement lived on this, even arguing at times that "reason is the tool of the bourgeoisie" as they refused rational discourse and shouted their slogans over and over again. And western democracies have not escaped, because today, in politics and in other arenas, image is everything. Images transcend reason, and politicians are often elected, not for what they think, but rather for their putative "image."

During the last decade⁶, lying as a necessary part of human nature has received support from the scientific community as well. To be sure, Biblical theology teaches that lying is endemic to human personality, that we are by nature liars. But it is quite another thing to view it as a necessity, or even as a socially adaptive virtue. However, that is

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 152-161.

⁶ R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 152.

precisely what researchers recently told the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science when they argued that "proficiency at lying may be the best measure of advancement, with primates much more adept at it than other mammals and human beings the most masterful deceivers on the planet." Thus, the evolutionary hypothesis presents a moral proclivity as a necessary virtue. Some speakers at the conference went even further, arguing that the human capacity for lying to self by creating religion (i.e., "culturally determined perceptions of nature") aided in man's survival. So there we have it: lying is an indispensable, socially adaptive virtue. We couldn't survive without it!

Very significantly, this is also what some child psychologists are saying. A case in point is Child magazine's April 1990 article "The Truth About Lying," which is captioned:

The Old View: Lying, like other issues of morality, was seen only in black and white. Children were taught that all lying was bad, deserving of strict punishment, and frequently reminded that "lying will make your nose grow as long as Pinocchio's." *The New View:* Today, some lying is considered normal. In fact, a child's first few lies are seen as an important step in the development of the self.⁷

Again, we would agree that lying is certainly normal, and further that parents need not overreact to their children's lies. (By the way, the article does contain some helpful advice for dealing with a child's lies.) But to see your child's first few lies as important to the development of self is problematic, to say the least. If this is so, then Jesus Christ never attained a healthy development of self! The implicit message of such articles is that lying in general is no big thing unless it's "pathological."

So here we are in the last decade of the twentieth century in a post-Kantian smog of relativism and agnosticism, where *Pinocchio* is reactionary, where lying is intellectually defended and propaganda *de rigueur* with our politicians and media. The result? We are a culture of liars.

According to the research data for *The Day America Told the Truth*: Americans lie. They lie more than we had ever thought possible before the study. But they told us the truth about how much they lie.

JUST ABOUT EVERYONE LIES - 91 PERCENT OF US LIE REGULARLY.

The majority of us find it hard to get through a week without lying. One in five can't make it through a single day - and we're talking about conscious, premeditated lies.... When we refrain from lying, it's less often because we think it's wrong (only 45 percent) than for a variety of other reasons, among them the fear of being caught (17 percent)....

We lie to just about everyone, and the better we know someone, the likelier we are to have told them a serious lie.... 36 percent of Americans confess to telling that kind of darker lie⁸

As to the question, who lies most in America?, the studies tell us:

- * Men lie more than women.
- * Young men lie more than older men.

⁷ Franny Shuker-Haines, "The truth about lying," Child (April 1990), p. 30.

⁸ James Patterson and Peter Kim, *The Day America Told the Truth* (NY: Prentice Hall, 1991), pp. 45-46.

- * Gays and bisexuals lie more than heterosexuals.
- * Blacks lie more than whites.
- * Catholics lie a bit more than Protestants, and both lie more than Jews.
- * Unemployed people lie more than those with jobs.
- * The poor lie more than the rich.
- * Liberals lie more than conservatives.

Among the authors' conclusions were these startling statements:

- * There are more serious liars right now (liars who do harm) than at any time in our nation's past. Lying has become a cultural trait in America. Lying is embedded in our national character. That hasn't really been understood around the world. Americans lie about everything - and usually for no good reason.

The majority of Americans today (two out of every three) believe there is nothing wrong with telling a lie. Only 31 percent of us believe honesty is the best policy⁹.

Honesty requires that we Christians admit that lying has also been a problem for the church, so that even the Apostle Paul had to exhort believers, "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices" (Colossians 3:9). But, candidly, we have to confess that today the disease flourishes in the Body of Christ. So widespread is it that 32 percent of Americans think they've been lied to by a clergyman.¹⁰

What is needed is a healing word, and none is more salving than the Ninth Word of Grace - "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16; cf. Deuteronomy 5:20). This great Word gives us the basis for a singularly graced life. Lived out, it will bring grace in your relationship with God, your family, your church, and the world.

LYING: THE PROHIBITION

Strictly speaking, this Commandment was originally focused against perjuring oneself in a judicial trial, not against other forms of lying and deception. But just as with the previous Commandment against adultery, which was expanded by Christ to include adulterous thoughts, and likewise with the Commandment against murder, which was expanded to forbid hatred, so here the very serious sin of lying/perjury will be broadened to include the whole spectrum of lying - sins of the tongue.' Leviticus 19:11, which comments on the Ten Commandments, says simply, "Do not

Fear

Perhaps even more lies are told out of fear. This may be the root of most children's lies - fear of consequences. And the result is usually quite harmless. But in adults deception can have monstrous effects - Watergates, Irangates, Pearly Gates.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 45, 49.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

Embarrassment

Many lie to avoid embarrassment or to keep from hurting others' feelings. In 1987 the *Washington Post Magazine* devoted its yearend issue to "1987: The Year of the Big Lie." The *Post's* respondents said they lied 92 percent of the time to save face and 98 percent of the time to keep from offending someone else.⁹ The latter reason often finds a congenial reception in the church, because concern for others' feelings is so purely "Christian."

Money

Some otherwise honest people find their Achilles' heel to be money. The rationalization is so reasonable: "Business is tough. The margin between success and failure is fractional. All my competitors 'fudge' on their accounting procedures. If I don't do what everyone else- is doing I'll fail! And then what will my investors say? They all know that I'm a Christian. I can't let them down. God will understand." Of course, God *does* understand - all too well!

Culture

Some people lie because they see the application of the Scriptures' prohibition against lying as culturally conditioned. Robertson McQuilkin, past president of Columbia Bible College, recounts his encounter with this kind of thinking while a missionary in Japan:

We were striving to achieve accreditation for our Christian theological school in Japan, surely a good end pursued for the glory of God. But the professor in charge of the project constantly brought for my signature documents that were not factual. Finally in exasperation, he exclaimed, "A lie may become the cross you must bear! " It fit well with the Japanese proverb, "A lie also is a useful thing." When I still declined to sign, the professor gave up in disgust: "Your problem is that you haven't become accustomed to the Japanese way of doing things." Was this a mere clash of culture? Was God to be served best by deception in this cultural format? (I should add that he was the only Japanese colleague who held this position.)

McQuilkin's clash points to a specter that looms large in much Christian thinking, even though it is rarely given such forthright-'n--i articulation. So many succumb to the "that's the way things get done around here" delusion.

LYING: THE WAYS¹¹

The human mind seemingly knows no end to its creativity when it comes to rationalizing conduct. This capacity is only exceeded by the creation of deceptions and lies.

Slander

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of Grace*, p. 159.

The most forthright is slander itself - lying about another's character or conduct. Thomas atson the Puritan divine wrote- "The scorpion carries his poison in his tail, the slanderer carries his in his tongue. Christ suffered such slander when He was called "a friend of sinners" - the implication being that He was a sinner Himself. And good John the Baptist was said to have a devil.

Slander is a sin to which the religious are particularly susceptible. So often when Christians learn to shed the obvious "big" sins, they become particularly vulnerable to dishing out pious slander. For while they are careful to avoid adultery, drunkenness, or stealing and are enviable examples of the upright life, they indulge a perverse delight in assaulting the character of others.

GOSSIP

Gossip is the unnecessary bearing of information that may or may not be true and is harmful to the subject. It isn't so much the things that go in one ear and out the other" that hurt, as the things that go in one ear, get all mixed up, and then slip out of the mouth. Here God's Word must be taken to heart.

1. "Do not go about spreading slander among your people.... I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:16).
2. ". . . a gossip separates close friends" (Proverbs 16:28).
3. "He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends" (Proverbs 17:9).
4. "The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts" (Proverbs 18:8).
5. "Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down" (Proverbs 26:20).

Tale-bearing may be rationalized as a kind of Christian obligation - even a duty. But such reasoning ignores the straightforward teaching of Scripture.

FLATTERY

Among the subtlest forms of deceit is flattery, which someone has piquantly defined as "saying things to a person's face that you would never say behind his ba --k! " Flattery oes not come from love for that person, but rather from a love for self that wants to be noticed or perhaps ingratiated to the one being flattered. Elihu ominously spoke against this when he said, "I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man; for if I were skilled in flattery, my Maker would soon take me away" (job 32:21, 22). God's people must avoid flattery just as the Apostle Paul and the writer of Proverbs averred: "You know we never used flattery" (1 Thessalonians 2:5); "do not associate with one who flatters with his lips" (Proverbs 20:19, NKJV).

EXAGGERATION

Playful exaggeration in story-telling - embellishing a story to entertain others - is not forbidden. But exaggerating one's work, as is so common in Christian ministry - making God's work more glorious or more "successful" than it is - is sin. Pretending that something is more wonderful than it is falls under the same condemnation.

CARELESSNESS

Many people become "chronically inaccurate" in what they say. They do not lie deliberately but carelessly. For this reason Dr. Samuel Johnson, the great man of letters, advised: "Accustom your children ... constantly to this; if a thing happened at one window and they, when relating it, say that it happened at another, do not let it pass, but instantly check them; you do not know where deviation of the truth will end. The lazy lie is a sign of moral stagnation!"

TRUE WORDS

Even true statements can be employed to deceive others - as a ship's first mate so well understood. It seems that the first mate had been derelict in his duties and had been disciplined by the ship's captain. But a few days later he got his revenge when the captain became ill, and the first mate assumed running the ship - and the keeping of the ship's log. His opening entry that day began, "Captain sober today . . ." Perfectly true - and a perfect deception in what it implied!

INSINUATION

Satan's slander of job is instructive. His method involved an insinuating question: "Does job fear God for nothing?" (job 1:9). The enemy did not plainly slander job as a believer who followed God for what he could get. He slyly raised the question - a grievous slander. This is so easy to do. "Is John really that smart?" "Why would Joe do that?" Insinuating questions are slippery libels on others. Those attacked are defenseless and the attackers unassailable - in this world!

- A.
- II. Loving [2:7] What is loving ministry based upon?
 - A. JUSTIFICATION A Sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.
 - B. REDEMPTION A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by His ransom.
 - C. FORGIVENESS A Sinner stands before God as a debtor and is forgotten by His payment.
 - D. RECONCILIATION A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.
 - E. ADOPTION A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.
- III. Passionate [2:8] What kind of heart can minister under any condition? One that is waiting for Jesus! What are the benefits of waiting for the Son? What will looking at Jesus help you overcome or atleast endure? Who waited for Jesus and when?
 - A. ENOCH LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH DEMON TIMES Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. (KJV); Hebrews 11:5-6 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is

a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (KJV). The world was literally on its last leg. Evil was everywhere. God was almost closed out. People were so wicked they had to be exterminated! And what does one do while looking for Jesus? Jude 14-15 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. (KJV)

- B. JOB LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH SICKNESS AND SUFFERING TIMES Job 19:25-26 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: (KJV) Satan buffets, beloved children die, life savings destroyed, wife torments, friends accuse and his body wastes! That is affliction! And what did he do while looking for Jesus? He spoke of Him: Job 19:25-26 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: (KJV)
- C. MOSES LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH DISSAPPOINTING TIMES Deuteronomy 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them. (KJV) What amazing dissappointments Moses faced!
1. Meteoric career in Egyptian Politics and military but hot temper puts him in desert obscurity
 2. Quiet family life in the country, God's call puts him in the hot seat away from his family.
 3. As a willing servant he became the greatest deliverer of all time next to Christ.
 4. As a humble follower he became the greatest prophet, knowing God face to face. He glowed from the contact with God.
 5. After leading the people 40 years as a self sacrificing servant leader, they continually (10x) rebel.
 6. In one angry act he is shut out of the Promised Land!
- D. DANIEL LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH PAGAN TIMES Daniel 7:9-10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (KJV) Captivity, POW But listen to Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. (KJV)
- E. ZECHARIAH LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH DISASTER TIMES Zechariah 14:5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from

before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. (KJV) The mighty earthquakes of life, disasters unexpected, known only to God. And what was he saying? Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (KJV)

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

1. 2 Timothy 4:6-8 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. (KJV);
2. 2 Peter 3:13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (KJV);
3. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (KJV)

G. JOHN LOOKED FOR JESUS THROUGH LONELY TIMES Revelation 1:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. (KJV) He was the last Apostle, disciple, last Christian? on a lonely island. . . Revelation 22:20-21 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (KJV)

IV. Dedicated [2:9-11]