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Job the sacrifice. The character of false teachers.

Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

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Transcript

Job chapter 1. There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. He possessed seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred female donkeys, and very many servants, so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east.

His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And when the days of the feast had run their course, Job would send and consecrate them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, It may be that my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.

Thus Job did continually. Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan,

From where have you come? Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.

And the Lord said to Satan, Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him, and his house, and all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face. And the Lord said to Satan, Behold, all that he has is in your hand.

Only against him do not stretch out your hand. So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and there came a messenger to Job and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the donkeys feeding beside them.

And the Sabaeans fell upon them, and took them, and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you. While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, The fire of God fell from heaven, and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you. While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, The Chaldeans formed three groups, and made a raid on the camels, and took them, and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.

While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and behold, a great wind came across the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone have escaped to tell you. Then Job arose and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshipped. And he said, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return.

The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this, Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

The book of Job raises many questions for its readers. Beyond the many questions raised by its narrative and its poetry, there are questions of dating, setting, and authorship that are particularly difficult to answer. Its Hebrew style is an unusual one, and many of its terms aren't found elsewhere.

John Hartley observes many of the parallels between Job and other parts of the biblical literature, with parts of the Proverbs and certain Psalms, especially Psalms 8 and 107. There are connections with Lamentations, with Amos, with Jeremiah, and with several parts of Isaiah. The character of Job is also mentioned in Ezekiel 14, verse 14.

The relationship between Job and some of these other texts is strong enough to suggest dependence, but it's not clear in which direction. Is the book of Job drawing from the other scriptures, or is Job the text that the other scriptures are drawing upon? Dates for the book have also varied considerably, with many people seeing different parts of the book as dating to different periods. Nehem Sarna, for instance, sees behind the framing narrative of the epilogue and the prologue some deeper epic story that dates back to a pre-Israelite period.

This, many scholars have suggested, was used as a framing device for a series of speeches, speeches that many scholars date to between the 7th and the 4th centuries BC. Following this approach, many scholars see tensions between the framing narratives of chapters 1 and 2 and chapter 42 in the prologue and the epilogue, and the speeches that they bookend. They argue, for instance, that the Job of the prologue and the epilogue is living in a rather different context from the Job that we see in the poetry that intervenes.

This tension, however, is greatly exaggerated, and as we look a bit more closely, I believe that they can readily be reconciled. The book has a fairly easy structure to discern. It begins with two chapters of the prologue, then it has Job's lament, there's a cycle of speeches that follow from chapters 4 to 27, there's a poem concerning wisdom in chapter 28, in chapters 29 to 31, Job delivers his final speech, followed by Elihu's speeches in chapters 32 to 37.

God's speeches and Job's response are found in chapter 38 to the beginning of chapter 42. The book concludes with an epilogue in chapter 42. The subject of the book are the sufferings of Job, and debate about those sufferings, leading to the question of where wisdom is to be found.

Its concern with wisdom and the fear of the Lord mean that its place among the poetic wisdom books is quite fitting. The book opens by introducing us to the character of Job, who lives in the land of Uz. We are not entirely sure where the land of Uz was.

The Septuagint identifies Job with the character of Jobab in chapter 36 of Genesis, one of the Edomite kings. And while this particular identification may be questionable, considering Job as an Edomite is not unreasonable. While there are various places that have been called Uz, in Lamentations chapter 4 verse 21, Uz seems to be associated with Edom.

In Genesis chapter 36 verse 28, one of the names of the Edomites is Uz. Furthermore, one of Job's friends is called Eliphaz the Temanite. Once again, in Genesis chapter 36 verse 11, one of the sons of Edom is called Eliphaz and he has a son called Teman.

All of these considerations suggest that Job is an Edomite, living to the south of the land of Israel, likely prior to the conquest. There is every reason to believe that Job was a real

person. He is described here as blameless and upright.

The language of blamelessness is used elsewhere of characters such as Noah, Abraham and Jacob. It's language that is associated with the sacrificial system, in which animals had to be without blemish in order to be fitting sacrifices. He fears God and turns away from evil.

The fear of the Lord is a common theme within the wisdom literature and Job exemplifies this trait that is elsewhere called the beginning of wisdom. The Book of Job is in many respects a book that is about wisdom, about the limited understanding of man and the mysterious ways of the Lord. From Job's righteous character, which is the thing of first importance, the narrator moves to discuss his family, his seven sons and three daughters.

There is a proportion here of seven to three, both significant numbers, which in turn add up to ten. The seven to three ratio is found elsewhere in scripture. We might think, for instance, of Solomon's 700 wives and 300 concubines.

From his family we now move to his possessions. He has 7,000 sheep and 3,000 camels, once again a seven three ratio, adding up this time to 10,000. While these aren't unrealistic numbers for a particularly wealthy man, it should be apparent that Job is not a normal individual.

He is a king or a chief among his people, a man of incredible wealth, indeed one who will be described in a moment as the greatest of all the people of the East. In chapter 29 verse 25, Job speaks of himself as like a king or a chief among his people. Bearing Job's wealth and status in mind is important when we consider what happens next.

What happens to Job is not merely a personal crisis, it is a crisis for his entire people. Their chief has been struck in a devastating way and it seems that the Lord has singled him out for particular judgment. This might help us to understand why the three friends confront him as they do in the later chapters.

They are his royal counsellors and they want him to confess to whatever it is that he has done that has brought this national disaster about. In addition to his 7,000 sheep and 3,000 camels, he owns 500 yoke of oxen and 500 female donkeys. This time the numbers are equal and add up to 1,000.

His 10 children, his 10,000 sheep and camels, his 1,000 oxen and female donkeys give us a sense of the completeness and the perfection that he experiences. This is a blameless man, a blameless man with a perfect household and with glorious and complete possessions. He enjoys so much wealth that each one of his sons has his own house in which he can hold these massive feasts that last for perhaps a week.

The seven sons and their seven houses holding their seven feasts, perhaps for their

seven days, accumulate sevens in addition to the tens that were accumulated earlier on. Once again the perfection and the glory of Job's house is being underlined. As a pious father, Job is concerned for the spiritual well-being of his children and concerned that they might have cursed God in their hearts, literally blessed God in their hearts.

He offers sacrifices for them early in the morning after every single feast that they have had. This presents Job both as a pious and a rich man but it also raises the theme of cursing God in the heart which will be a very important theme in what follows. We also see a set up for a contrast here.

Job is concerned that his children might have cursed God in their hearts yet the Lord, Job's father, puts him forward as someone who will not curse God in his heart when he is put to the test. The setting of all of this seems to be in a patriarchal era. We see later on that the Chaldeans and the Sabians form raiding parties.

The wealth of Job is measured in oxen, sheep, camels and donkeys and then there are the possible associations with the descendants of Edom. From the portrayal of this perfect man, this new Adam as it were, within the garden of his perfect family and perfect kingdom and possessions, we are made privy to a heavenly scene, the gathering of the sons of God to present themselves before the Lord. This should remind us of divine counsel scenes that we find elsewhere in scripture, for instance in 1 Kings chapter 22 with Micaiah's description of the host of heaven before the Lord.

The sons of God here are the angels as they seem to be in Genesis chapter 6, although it's possible that some human prophets might be among them. Among their number however, the adversary or Satan is present. While the New Testament speaks in places like Revelation chapter 12 of Satan and his angels being cast down from heaven, in this period Satan seems to have enjoyed heavenly access.

In Zechariah chapter 3 verse 1 we have a description of Satan in the divine counsel. Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The Lord addresses Satan who describes himself as one who has been roaming around on the earth, perhaps bringing to mind the epistles description of him as a roaring lion prowling around seeking whom he may devour.

While Job was concerned that one of his children had done something wrong, cursing God in their hearts, the Lord puts Job forward to the front line, pushing him forward into the position of testing. He invites Satan to test and inspect Job, presenting him as a singularly righteous man, a man of integrity and godly character. Satan however is having none of it, insisting that Job is only righteous because it works out well for him.

If Job were really put to the test, he would fail. The Lord has set a hedge around him. The glorious paradise of Job is guarded all around with this great barrier to protect it.

If the Lord would just tear down that barrier and allow Satan true access, Job would rapidly capitulate. Perhaps we should see in the story of Job some of the themes at the beginning of the book of Genesis. Job is a new Adam in a new paradise.

He is being tested by the Lord as a son. He is facing the attack of the serpent and the temptation of his wife. Will he succeed where the first Adam failed? The Lord grants Satan access to Job and the rest of the chapter is a litany of disaster.

In one day, four hammer blows descend upon Job and his family, related together by the same pattern. His oxen and donkeys are stolen and servants are killed by the edge of the sword by a foreign tribe. Then the fire of God falls down and burns up the sheep and servants.

And then camels are stolen and servants are killed by the edge of the sword. And finally a great wind strikes the house in which his sons and daughters are feasting and they are killed. In each case we see a similar formula.

Only one servant survives to bring the terrible news. There is a chiasmic structure as well to observe, a book-ended structure. Toby Sumter observes that it begins with sons and daughters eating and drinking and ends with them eating and drinking and then being killed.

Within those bookends there are oxen and donkeys stolen, servants killed by the edge of the sword, and then camels stolen and servants killed by the edge of the sword. And then in the middle the fire of God falls down and burns up the sheep and the servants. Sumter argues that this particularly singles out the falling down of the fire of God.

This is the one disaster in particular that is marked out as an action of God. Whereas the first and third disasters could be attributed to human forces, this particular disaster points towards God as the instigator of Job's crisis. Sumter notes the presence of several allusions to themes of sacrifice within this chapter.

Job was introduced to us as a blameless man, like the sacrifices needed to be without blemish. Job symbolically offered sacrifices for his children in the earlier part of the chapter. In the second disaster the fire of God comes from heaven as the fire of God might come upon the sacrifices, burning them up into the presence of God.

This happens with the sheep that correspond with the sons. The great divine wind then strikes the four corners of the house in which Job's sons are celebrating their feast. Four corners language is associated elsewhere in scripture with the tabernacle and the altar.

All of this points in the direction of a sort of sacrifice taking place. Job and his household are being rendered a sacrifice. By the disasters falling upon him and his household he is being offered to the Lord.

Job's response to all of this is faithful. His action is an expression of his mortality. He tears his robe, shaves his head and falls to the ground.

And then he worships. He acknowledges the fact that he came from his mother's womb with nothing and he will return there with nothing. Everything that he has ever received has been a blessing and a gift from the Lord, not something to which he was ever entitled.

And as he loses it he gives thanks for what he once enjoyed. Rather than cursing the name of the Lord, as Satan has said he would do, he blesses the name of the Lord. The theme of blessing or cursing the Lord holds together the entire chapter, as do the themes of sacrifice.

A question to consider. In verse 21, Job says, Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. Where else in scripture can we fill out this association between the womb and the earth? 1 Timothy chapter 6 Let all who are under a yoke as bond-servants regard their own masters as worthy of all honour, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers. Rather they must serve all the better, since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things.

If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of the world.

But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.

It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the

commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time, he who is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see.

To him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen. As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you, avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you.

1 Timothy chapter 5 mentioned two groups of persons who needed to be accorded honour, the widows and the elders. Chapter 6 begins with a third group, masters need to be honoured by their bond servants. The teaching of verses 1 and 2 here could be related to the household codes that we find in places like Ephesians chapter 5 and 6, Colossians 3 and 4 and 1 Peter 2 and 3. In contrast to those other places, this is not a more comprehensive teaching about masters and servants, husbands and wives, children and parents, but only deals with how slaves need to treat their masters.

Presumably the Christians in Corinth already were familiar with household codes, and the teaching here is more occasional in character, addressing a particular problem that had arisen in the congregation. Unruly servants would have been a cause of disrepute for Christians within the society. If slaves, presumably emboldened by the dignifying teaching of Paul's gospel, a message that presented them as standing on the same level ground before God as their masters, started to shrug off their responsibilities of service, non-Christians in the society might see the church as fundamentally opposed to social order, a destructive and revolutionary force undermining its social institutions.

Paul's concern in verse 1 is quite manifest. He does not want the name of God and the teaching of the gospel to be reviled. Elsewhere in scripture, prophets challenge the people of God, telling them that the nations blaspheme on account of them.

Their openly sinful and rebellious behaviour causes people outside of the people of God to despise the truth that they stand for. To address this concern, and to avoid the gospel coming into social disrepute, Paul instructs the bond servants to treat their masters as worthy of honour, recognising the social institution of slavery. However, in the way that he treats the duties of servants, there are elements to be seen that might surprise us.

Paul especially addresses the relationship between believing servants and those masters who are also believing. In such situations there would be an especially keen temptation

to treat the masters as social equals on account of the gospel, rather than truly as masters. Paul's understanding of unity and a sort of equality in Christ do not, however, depend upon the equalisation of social structures, even though they may have some implications for them.

Paul's reasoning in verse 2 is a surprising one. He speaks of the slaves' relationship to their believing masters in language of benefaction, language that was typically applied in a person of higher status' relationship to someone who was of lower status. Philip Towner observes some of the parallels between Paul's teaching here and that of Seneca, his contemporary.

He quotes from Seneca, There are certain acts which the law neither enjoins nor forbids. It is in these that a slave finds opportunity to perform a benefit. So long as that which he supplies is only that which is ordinarily required of a slave, it is a service.

When he supplies more than a slave need do, it is a benefit. It ceases to be called a service when it passes over into the domain of friendly affection. And just as a hireling gives a benefit if he supplies more than he contracted to do, so a slave, when he exceeds the bounds of his station in good will towards his master by daring some lofty deed that would be an honour even to those more happily born, a benefit is found to exist inside the household.

Jesus employs a similar sort of logic in the Sermon on the Mount, when he instructs those who have an item taken to give even more to those who would take from them. Rather than being a passive victim or a person imposed upon by another, in going over and above expectations in such a manner, the Christian becomes the benefactor and the person of greater agency within the situation. The person who would try to take from them, or in this case, the person to whom they owed service, is now placed in the position of being the recipient of their benefaction.

The Christian slave can thereby enjoy agency and dignity within his situation. There is a parallel that can be drawn between the opening verses of the letter in chapter 1 verses 3 to 20 and the closing section of the letter which Towner points out. Chapter 1 verse 3 contains a command to Timothy to instruct, which corresponds to the second half of chapter 6 verse 2. Chapter 1 verses 4 to 7 there is a description of the false teachers and the theme of love, and here in verses 3 to 6 again we have the false teachers and the theme now of godliness.

In chapter 1 verses 7 to 10 the misunderstanding of the law is addressed, and then in this chapter verses 5 and 6 the misunderstanding of wealth is addressed, with the following critique of an ordinate desire for In verses 11 to 16 of chapter 1 there is the contrasting model of Paul that is provided, along with the work of Christ in his life, and then here there is the model of Timothy in verses 11 to 15, again with the example of Christ brought in as part of it. Both chapters have a concluding doxology in verse 17 of

chapter 1 and in verse 16 of this chapter. After both doxologies there is a repetition of Timothy's commission.

The end of verse 2 should be taken with the verses that follow. Paul charges Timothy to perform his task of teaching. In performing this task he will have to deal with the false teachers.

The false teachers here are defined by those who teach different doctrines apart from the one that has been taught in Christ. The true doctrine agrees with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and is a teaching that accords with godliness. The true teaching will produce a certain character of life, which we might call godliness.

The reference to the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ might perhaps be a reference to our Lord's own words, or maybe it's a reference to the words concerning him. Implied here is a doctrinal and a moral test. The doctrinal test is conformity with the teaching of the tradition, and the moral test is the fruit of godliness.

Paul goes on to explain something of the psychology of the false teachers who will fail these tests. Such teachers are driven by pride but are fundamentally ignorant. They seem to have a deep-seated need for controversy and want to argue about minor matters.

While the person who is not a perceptive reader of other people's emotions might imagine that the false teachers are genuinely concerned about the issues that they are ostensibly arguing about, Paul wants Timothy to be aware that this is not the case. They argue because they need to not because they genuinely care about the issues. For them it is more likely a game of status.

Finding things to argue about is a way to avoid submitting to others or showing any sort of humility. It's a way to vaunt their own authority and importance over those to whom they should be listening. It is essential that a leader recognize the character of such people within a community and deal with them truly.

By their very nature such persons are fractious and will cause all sorts of problems in a community where they are allowed free reign. Because they are ultimately driven by pride and conceit, they treat the truth as something to be used for their own advantage and advancement. They teach in such a way to increase their income, flattering and pandering to the wealthy and fleecing the flock.

We might also see a connection between their divisiveness, their pride and the way in which they are driven by a desire for gain. They want to form their own following and to do that they need to drive people away from others. They sow divisions, suspicions, slanders and other things that consolidate their own support and turn their followers against faithful teachers of the gospel.

To the behavior of such false teachers, Paul contrasts the faithful teacher of the word of God. For such a person, godliness with contentment or self-sufficiency is great gain. The faithful teacher is not using godliness.

He sees godliness as an end in itself. It is a great gain to be conformed to the character of Christ and to know contentment with that, the self-sufficiency that allows you to enjoy peace of mind and satisfaction in all sorts of material conditions is a considerable blessing. Paul already spoke of the surpassing value of godliness in the preceding chapter in verses 7 and 8. Have nothing to do with irreverent silly myths, rather train yourself for godliness.

For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. One of the things that Paul is revealing here is the connection between a commitment to the truth and one's management of one's fundamental loves and passions. The person who is driven by pride will always have a tendency towards division and a desire for wealth and status that makes him a source of conflict.

These fundamental disorders of the heart will lead such persons in the direction of false teaching. If the faithful teacher wants to avoid being led astray in such a manner, he needs to master his own heart. He needs to deal with the pride and conceit that makes him resist learning the truth or that leads him to want to be the center of the stage, the head of the movement.

Paul reminds Timothy that we will bring nothing out of the world just as we brought nothing into it and consequently the contentment with the little things that we need for our continued life with godliness is a great thing to enjoy. The extreme desire for more, those desires that tether us to this present age are a source of all sorts of temptations, evils, traps and have been the cause of the downfall of many. Job expresses some of the contentment that can come with godliness in chapter 1 verse 21 of his book and he said, Jesus also teaches on this matter in the Sermon on the Mount, teaching his disciples that the more they invest their hearts and their energies and their resources in earthly treasures, the more that they will find their hearts trapped by those things.

Matthew chapter 6 verses 19 to 21, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Having signposted all of these dangers, Paul charges Timothy to flee from them.

The statement here to flee from something and to pursue something else can also be found in another form in 2nd Timothy chapter 2 verse 22. So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Paul addresses Timothy as a man of God, a man who has committed to the

things of God, ought to be a godly man, a man characterized by the way of godliness.

Paul depicts the way of godliness using a number of different terms, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness. Righteousness is moral uprightness. Godliness refers to a form of life and character that conforms to the God that has called us.

Faith, love and steadfastness might be related to the three theological virtues of faith, love and hope. To these must be added gentleness. Whereas Timothy's opponents are characterized by a love of quarrels and conflict and division.

Timothy must be gentle in the way that he treats people, a peacemaker, a reconciler, a man whose humility leads him to put other people's interests ahead of his own. This gentleness does not entail a lack of strength. He is to fight the good fight of faith.

This may be a more military metaphor or it may be working with the athletic metaphors that we've had in preceding chapters. He has been charged with a mission and he must lay hold of eternal life just as he once confessed the name of Christ before many witnesses, presumably at the time of his baptism. He needs to carry through with this commitment, standing firm and contending till the end.

Once again Paul charges Timothy in front of the whole heavenly assembly, before God and of Christ Jesus. And he gives the example of Christ Jesus as one who stood firm to the end. His faithful and unwavering commitment to his mission before Pontius Pilate is an example that the Christian should follow.

In a similar manner, facing the time of greatest testing, the Christian like Timothy should stand firm, holding firmly and without compromise to the commission that he has been given, and to do this until the time of the appearing of Jesus Christ. Paul concludes this section with the doxology in which he expresses the incomparability of God. The language here perhaps underlines the way that the Lord has claimed to Timothy's loyalties over all others and that pursuit of godliness in relationship to such an incomparable God is to be valued over everything else.

Before signing off the letter, Paul gives Timothy some instruction concerning the rich of this age. We find various forms of such teaching elsewhere in scripture, not least in the Sermon on the Mount, as already mentioned. In James 1 9-11 for instance, let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation and the rich in his humiliation, because like a flower of the grass he will pass away.

For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the grass, its flower falls and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in the midst of his pursuits. Recognizing the limited and fleeting character of earthly riches, the rich Christian is advised to invest his resources well, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready

to share.

By investing his riches in the service of the poor, he is storing up treasures for himself in heaven. By such investment of his riches, he is laying hold of that which is truly life, not just the apparent life of earthly wealth. Paul concludes by drawing Timothy's attention to the many people who have wrecked their faith by turning aside and abandoning the charge that he has been given.

He is not to be ensnared by the so-called knowledge that so easily entices those who are proud and puffed up. Rather, in humility, he must remain faithful in his calling, guarding what has been committed to him and faithfully discharging his commission to teach it to others. The concluding greeting, Grace be with you all, addresses a plural you, not just Timothy.

Perhaps Paul also has the Ephesian believers in view here. A question to consider, within this chapter Paul says rather a lot concerning riches. In verse 10 he makes the famous statement, For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

What are some ways in which the love of money can serve as a root of various kinds of evil?