

PREFACE

*“Thank you pastor for yesterday’s message. It’s true what people said that because of the China brethren, the-measure of the Holy Spirit was very strong upon you. Although I didn’t deserve to be in one of the good seats, I was right in front – I was caught in the blast. It wasn’t for me but for the China brethren – that’s why God spoke strongly through you. But it was as if I was in the way. It’s very powerful and very frightening when you speak about the Calvinistic Gospel. Whereas when you hear any preacher in Europe speak about it, it’s TULIP basically. It’s dry and dead. There is no fear and God does not visit your soul. At least not in that measure. One thing which I felt I understood from the first part of your message when you spoke from the psalmist’s final words of Psalm 119 are these doctrines of the perseverance of the saints ultimately linked to the absolute sovereignty of God, yet he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Someone who intellectually assents to the Calvinistic doctrines will understand that it’s necessary for God to preserve us – but what’s so different in your exposition is that experimental understanding of my own depravity. It’s not only that God has to keep me in the way, but that I must continually return to the way because I will always turn aside and will never follow because of the propensity to go awry. It says in Jude about our human responsibility. [Pastor: “To build yourselves up in your most holy faith and keep yourself in the love of Christ.”] There is not the will or ability to keep or rectify oneself. That’s why it is not only necessary to assent or even to believe the absolute sovereignty of God but there’s need for this meekness or uprightness because there always has to be correction. I enjoyed very much the progression of the message when you introduced everyone and where there was this meet and greet: firstly from the life of Yeshua but mainly from the life of Paul. I’ve heard preaching before about how a sure sign of apostasy is not so much a deviation from the doctrines, but to go away from the person who is the source of your spiritual blessings. Maybe it’s the clearest external mark of apostasy. You might still hold the correct doctrines, but the Holy Spirit is administered by a person and the absence of the Holy Spirit is apostasy, even if our doctrines might appear to be intact. [Pastor: “That’s seeing it from the experimental perspective.”] So it’s true and could be a hard saying for the Brits, your position about Barnabas. There’s always this question: why doesn’t Paul name and shame him in his swan-song? There could be reasons why Paul doesn’t, but the fact is that every heretical document in the last 2000 years is stuck to Barnabas, so I feel when I look at it all, it is that God was not pleased with him. What was very scary was what I saw again last night: that ultimately, Paul accepted John Mark back. Barnabas could have been right on that issue. [Pastor: “Yes!”] but he was the loser. Who knows how much of a loser he was? Maybe eternally? I felt that when you look at church history it could be very difficult. Many people hold some measure of the truth and yet they argue with each other and are at complete loggerheads. There is fighting and difficulty and it’s hard to trace the Historic Faith. Even though many of them don’t have exactly what we have now – they don’t have the measure of light that you have. **But the Holy Spirit is very clear so Paul was the one, even over and above the twelve Apostles, who had the greatest measure of anointing and whom God had raised up. So Luke also was the one who was raised up to write about it and to document it. There could be no confusion, so Luke didn’t go with Barnabas.** Maybe he even preached effectually for some time – we don’t know. But Luke was with Paul and so the people of God have subsequently had the testimony of Paul. The Holy Spirit was with Paul and God had chosen Paul. What’s most touching is that we see Luke quietly moving through the crowd. But I think I found it instructional when you spoke about Onesiphorus and particularly the distinction between Paul’s prayer for the family of Onesiphorus and his personal sentiments and hope that he might find grace on that day. It’s not a point of minutiae. It has a direct bearing on this message which is on persevering grace – that it’s important we don’t infringe on the sovereignty of God even when we speak about the eternal destiny of people. [Pastor: “Even when we have to speak about those who’ve passed away, we should be wary as how we ought to express our sentiments, especially as a prayer, because otherwise it will amount to a Roman Catholic doctrine – praying for the dead, affirming the concept of purgatory. So note that was very carefully worded when Paul wrote it in II Timothy 1:16-18; 4:19b. Mark well the difference between the household of Onesiphorus and the soul of Onesiphorus as you see in these verses—it is very aptly and precisely worded by Paul. I marvel at the wisdom of it!”] In this instance, I find it very humanising that not only is there the fear of God and the hope of His mercies, but man is put in his place, because ultimately we’re never completely conclusive but we hope on the mercies of God continually waiting upon God right until the very last minute. It’s touching regarding the fate of Onesiphorus that when Luke decided to stay with Paul it was not because he found it interesting and Paul was a good source of material for Luke’s books to produce a best-seller, but it was Luke knowing that he could die and experience the fate of Onesiphorus. When you introduced Onesimus and Archippus, you brought out one who was a slave and nobody, yet Archippus who was a rich kid was a disaster and responsible for the failure of the Laodicean church. Your message was tailored to the China brethren who undergo hardship and danger..... it’s a warning to me – why am I so afraid of trouble or the law? I’m disqualifying myself from the blessings. I think finally, although it’s not a strong point to finish on, I*

wondered why Epaphras is there in the mix. It does raise up the issue that those who are closer to Paul had a different degree of responsibility as he had a different pastoral relation to them. Paul made the distinction. The Colossians owed their faith to Epaphras. Even though Paul was raised up to preach to everyone, he made that distinction. I know I received the Gospel from you and not from anybody else. There's no doubt in my mind what it would be to depart from you. Thank you." Response of Sarah Harper, Ashford, England, to pastor's message, 'Enduring Faithfully Unto The End', Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia; this is the last instalment in this nexus; 29 January 2016 AD