

Psalm 34 Series Part 4

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[0 : 00] Well, the schools are back. Parents shout hoorah and children lament the end of the holidays.

When we think of schools being back and this whole question of education, there's always ongoing debates, and especially at this time of year when the results come out, debates as to the quality of education and how it is improving or not, as the case may be, depending on who is asked, and of course many proposals as to how to improve the quality of education.

I think it's true that in some schools, or I think for first years if I'm not mistaken, there is this curriculum for excellence that is being introduced, and much debate surrounding that initiative.

Will it actually deliver excellence? Indeed, what is excellence? How do you measure or determine that? Well, as we turn this evening once again to Psalm 34, we've been considering it now already on three occasions, and we return to it, and the section of the Psalm that we're going to consider are verses 11 to 14, and at verse 11 there is a shift in the Psalm, a shift in the flavor of the Psalm, if that's the way to describe it, from, in the first verses, a very graphic and vivid personal testimony from David of what he is experiencing and what he has experienced.

Certainly he draws from that personal experience to encourage, to challenge, to exhort his readers, but there is very much this flavor of David opening up his soul, as it were, of sharing with us that which he has gone through and how God has helped him and how he has cried out for help and has known God's answer.

[2 : 10] But in verse 11, there is, as I say, a shift in the flavor, in the manner in which David expresses himself.

And in verses 11 to 14, we pass from this personal testimony almost to a classroom scene, very much in the tradition of the wisdom literature.

Indeed, these verses, verses 11 to 14, and indeed following on from there, would sit very comfortably in the book of Proverbs. Well, let's read the verses in question.

I'm sure as we read them, many of you will see where I'm coming from in making that point, that the flavor of the language used is a language very similar to what we would find in Proverbs, in what is known in terms of genre as the wisdom literature.

Well, let's read these verses. Psalm 34, verses 11 to 14. Come, my children, listen to me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

[3 : 18] Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies, turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

Up to that point, we're going to be considering this evening. David brings us, as it were, into the classroom and identifies for us three key ingredients in any educational experience.

Three key ingredients that we can find in these short verses. First of all, we are introduced to, we learn something of the teacher.

And I want to think about what we learn as regards the biblical perception or view of what a teacher should be. First of all, the teacher.

But of course, there has to be a pupil as well. And in these verses, we meet with the pupil. Or in any case, we're given some insights as to what should characterize the pupil in any learning experience.

[4 : 33] But we have also another key element, which is the lesson, that which is being taught. And that too, we find in these verses. So that's the manner in which we're going to tackle this section of Psalm 34.

Notice what is said, or what we can learn concerning the teacher, the pupil, and the lesson. Now before doing that, and looking at each in turn, it is worth noting that though this is in the genre of wisdom literature, and so in a sense what we have here are timeless truths less rooted in personal experience.

Or less rooted in the personal experience of any one individual. Nonetheless, though that is so, it remains the case that we can better appreciate even this section of the Psalm in the light of David's circumstances.

And we've already, on more than one occasion, highlighted what his circumstances were. And this evening we will do so very fleetingly, simply noting how the Psalm begins, perhaps for the benefit of those who haven't been previously.

There at the beginning of the Psalm we read of David when he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left. David is fleeing from Saul. Saul is consumed with jealousy because of David's popularity.

[5 : 59] He wishes to see David dead, and so David has to flee. And in his flight there is this incident where he heads to Gath of all places.

And there to avoid death he pretends to be insane. And in 1 Samuel, where the account is found, we are told that he flees to the caves. And it's, I think, reasonable to presume, though we can't state this categorically, that it is in those very caves that he pens this Psalm.

These, then, are his personal circumstances. And as I say, though this section of the Psalm is more timeless in a sense, less rooted in personal experience, nonetheless, even this section can be enriched in our appreciation of it as we consider or bear in mind those circumstances.

Well, that's really just by the by, by way of introduction. But let's consider the first element in this teaching experience, in this classroom scene, in this classroom that is a teacher.

What does the passage teach us concerning a biblical conception of a teacher? I would suggest that there are two things that we find here in verse 11, two very important things, fundamental to God's view of what a teacher should be.

[7 : 22] The first thing I would suggest is this, that the teacher should be one who loves his pupils, who loves his disciples, if you wish.

The language here in verse 11 is eloquent. And I think very clearly it gets across this truth. Come, my children, listen to me.

The teacher is speaking. He is gathering his pupils. He is gathering his disciples. And the very language that he uses speaks eloquently of the affection, of the love, of the concern that he has for those whom he is inviting.

There is a gracious, a loving invitation extended to those designated as his children. Come, my children. Now, as we think of the psalmist, they are fleeing from Saul, only recently married.

Is he inviting his own children to hear instruction from the lips of the father? No, clearly not. Here he is gathering. If indeed we can assume that he is in the caves with this motley crew who had gathered around him, he is gathering those who are not his own children.

[8 : 39] And yet he speaks to them in these terms because of the care that he has for them, the fatherly love that he has for his disciples, for those who would learn from him.

These original pupils, we've already noted on a previous occasion, that those who gathered there in the caves with David are described in very vivid terms as those in distress, in debt, and discontented.

These were the ones David, on this first occasion, invites to hear instruction. It is very clear that he loved these men.

He loved them, and they knew that he loved them. They knew the affection that he had for them. They knew the commitment of David to those who gathered around him.

They knew that he would do anything for them. Here was not one simply imparting instruction. Here is not simply one who has knowledge that he wants to download to others.

[9 : 48] This is not David saying, Well, I know about military strategy, and I'm going to teach you all I know. Or I know how to play the harp, and I'll teach you how to play the harp. I don't really care for you. I don't like you. I certainly don't love you, but I can teach you.

I can effectively and maybe very efficiently get across knowledge that you can take and do with as you will. This is not the biblical conception.

It's not God's conception of one who would teach. Rather, we have one here who loves his pupils. And as we consider that for ourselves, it is, of course, still true today.

This applies, of course, very immediately to those who are parents, as we would instruct our children, that there would be that love that motivates us, that that would be the foundation for the instruction that we give.

But those of you even here this evening who are involved in teaching in one way or another in the life of the church, Sunday school teachers, how important that this be at the very heart of the work that you do, that there be a love, a concern, a care for those whom God has entrusted to you with this very important task of teaching them in Sunday school week by week.

[11 : 14] And that God would help you to love them more and more. I'm sure there is that love in your heart for the pupils, for the children. But, of course, love is something that can be cultivated, that must be cultivated.

We ought not to have an overly mystical view. Well, either you do or you don't. And if you do, fine. And if you don't, well, what can you do? No, love can be cultivated. And you can ask God to give you more love.

And that that will be reflected in the very manner in which you teach, in the manner in which you pray for the children, in the manner in which you even prepare your lessons because of the love that you have for these children.

And indeed, those who are schoolteachers, some, many in our congregation are schoolteachers, and there too, that there would be in you this reality, that God's view of what a teacher is would find reflection in your own life and work, that there would be a love and a concern for your pupils.

Now, I'm conscious that depending on the role that you have, that can be very difficult. So clearly, a class teacher of primary two or primary three who have a group of children who are the same all the year round, there is much more opportunity to build up a relationship and build up a real genuine love and care and concern for those children in the course of a year.

[12 : 43] Maybe if you're a secondary school teacher and you have several classes, and maybe you have each class for three or four hours, clearly that is much more difficult. And that is true, and we recognize that.

But nonetheless, the principle still holds that from God's perspective, the teacher fundamentally should be one who loves his pupils, who has a genuine personal care and concern for them.

That's the first thing we find. But there's a second thing I think we find here, perhaps less explicitly, but I think nonetheless present here. The second element in a biblical conception of the teacher, and it is this, that the teacher is one who has authority to teach.

And I draw this out, and I trust not stretching over much the passage, but I draw this out from that first verse, verse 11, Come, my children, listen to me.

Listen to me. Now, it's a simple invitation, but I would suggest also a bold invitation. And very especially when the matters to be addressed, as is the case on this occasion, are life lessons.

[13 : 58] David is to instruct those who would respond to the invitation on matters of life, of what life is about, of how life is to be lived, of how we can be happy and satisfied in the life that we live.

These are life lessons. These are matters of great consequence. And on these matters, David is able to say, Listen to me. Listen to me.

And I am sure that as he would have expressed those words, Listen to me, his pupils would be thinking, This man knows what he's talking about. This man has the authority to instruct us on these matters.

This is a man who has gone through trials and tribulations and difficulties. This is a man who is able to teach on the fear of God, for we see in him one who fears God.

This is one who is able to exhort us to keep our eyes from evil, our tongue from evil, to do good, to seek peace, and pursue it, matters that we'll be considering in a moment.

[14 : 59] He can teach us these things, and we will listen to what he has to say, for he has the authority, the moral, the spiritual authority, to instruct us in these matters.

We know that it's true in everyday life that if our lives contradict our lessons, then we have a problem. However eloquent and however true, the content of what we say, if that content is contradicted by the manner in which we live, then the pupils will be very unlikely to take on board the lessons that are being taught.

I think I've already shared with you on a previous occasion a phrase that there is in Spanish that translated roughly goes, I can't hear what you're saying because your life is shouting too loudly.

And how often is that true of many teachers, of many of us, who would in one way or another, in one capacity or other, be engaged in this task of teaching.

So these two elements we find here, love and authority. And of course, if we were to imagine, and it doesn't take a great leap of imagination, if we were to imagine in whom are these qualities most perfectly, most evidently, most beautifully found, well, we would very quickly come to the conclusion that we find these things most perfectly and most beautifully in the person of Jesus, the rabbi, the teacher.

[16 : 38] Yes, the content of what he taught was excellent, but there was the foundation to that content. He was one who loved his disciples.

He was one who was able to teach with authority. Even his enemies recognized that. Here is a man who teaches with authority, so different from the religious men of his day, whose content perhaps was faultless on many occasions.

And yet there was that hypocrisy that detracted from their teaching. Love and authority.

Before moving on to think of the second actor, as it were, in this educational experience of this classroom scene that David invites us to, maybe just a question for you to ponder on, on the basis of what we've said concerning the teacher.

And I leave it just for you to think about. I wonder, can we really expect these two fundamental, biblical characteristics of a teacher, love and authority, can we really expect them to be found adequately or ordinarily in our state school system?

[17 : 58] Can we really expect that? And if we believe that these are fundamental to the teaching of our children, what does that lead us to consider? Ought we not to be thinking of alternatives whereby these characteristics, fundamental in God's perception to effective teaching education, would indeed be found in those who teach our children?

Now, I'm not for a moment saying that these characteristics are not found, but I question, are they found adequately or ordinarily in the schools where our children are taught?

Well, that's simply for you to think about. But moving on to the second actor in this classroom scene, the pupil. And I think in these verses, we also find what we might call two conditions for a good pupil.

Two conditions for a good pupil. The first one is desire. Verse 12, notice what we read there. Whoever of you loves life, and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil.

The question is being asked of the pupil. Do you want to learn? Do you want to live a good life? Do you love life? Do you want your life to be rich and full and satisfying?

[19 : 22] Is this something that you want? Because if you desire this, then I have an answer for you. If you want to live life in this way, then I have good news for you.

I have instruction for you that will enable you to live this life. But do you want it? Is there desire? You see, if there's no desire or motivation to learn, then the best teachers will struggle.

Now, we know that to be true. You can have an excellent teacher, but if the pupil has no desire to learn, however intellectually capable he or she might be, there will be scant results.

Desire, motivation are necessary. But where there is a deep desire to learn, that will convert the classroom into a place of adventure and discovery and excitement.

The men who gathered around David were, I am sure, hungry to be taught. In the midst of their miserable circumstances, there remained, so it would seem, a love for life and a desire for something better.

[20 : 32] And so when David says to them, come, gather around, do you love life? Well, listen to what I have to say. Do you want to live many good days? Then listen to what I have to say.

Desire. What about us? What about you? How would you answer the question posed by the psalmist there in verse 12?

And I say the question, it's not framed as a question, or it's not translated, rather, as a question in the version that we are using, but I think it's reasonable to understand that it is, in fact, a question.

Who of you loves life? Who of you desires to see many good days? Then do these things. If this is what you desire, then this is what you must do to achieve this, to experience that which you desire.

And so I ask you, do you love life? Do you want to live life to the full? Do you want your life to be rich and satisfying? Then listen to the instruction that follows, that you might experience that which you desire.

[21 : 41] So there is desire as a necessary condition for a good pupil. But in addition to desire, there is a very related need or condition, if you wish, and it is this, disposition.

By that I mean a willingness to be taught. Now we might say that that follows on naturally from desire. If there is a desire to learn, then there is likely to be a disposition or a willingness to be taught.

I say you would ordinarily expect that, but it doesn't always follow. We are all very proud. And so it is conceivable that you could have somebody who would say, yes, I do want to live, in this case, the matter to hand, I do want to live a full life, a rich life, a satisfying life.

And yet the instruction that you need, you don't take advantage of because of pride. Who is he to teach me? What does he know about that? I'll discover these things for myself.

I don't think the answers will lie in the Bible. Maybe there are answers to these questions, but surely not in the Bible. So there's a desire to live a rich life, a full life, a satisfying life, but pride or folly or foolishness would stop you and would remove from you that willingness to be taught.

[23 : 00] But the good pupil is one who not only has a desire to be taught, but has a willingness to be taught. And so those who were first invited by the psalmist, come, my children.

They didn't respond, who do you think you are calling us children? We're grown men. Don't speak to us like that. We know just as much as you do. Let's rather have a dialogue. Let's have a conversation, because we have as much to bring to the table as you do.

No. There is a humility. There is a willingness to be taught by one they recognize as having greater insight and greater understanding and greater experience in these matters, in these matters of life.

A willingness to be taught, a humility that would willingly sit at the feet of the master, of the teacher. Desire and disposition will ensure that the pupil responds to the invitation, come.

You see, nobody is forced into this classroom. The life lessons offered by David, offered by God in the Bible, are for those who wish to learn.

[24 : 11] For those who wish to learn. If you don't wish to learn, then that's up to you. Nobody will force you. Nobody will twist your arm. If you are of the view that there's nothing here for me, there's nothing that I can take from this, there's nothing for me to learn about life from this book, well, so be it.

That is your decision. That is your choice. That is your prerogative. But if there is in you this desire and this willingness to be taught, then answer, respond to the invitation, come, my children, listen to me.

I will teach you the fear of the Lord. It is God's desire that you live a full, rich, and satisfying life.

Jesus came that you might live and live life to the full. But are you willing to be taught? Which brings us on to the third element, which is the lesson.

We thought about the teacher, the pupil, and now thirdly and finally, the lesson that is in these verses, a lesson that is taught, that is a subject matter that the psalmist is considering.

[25 : 28] And every lesson, I am told, should have an objective. In fact, I think every sermon should have an objective. I'm not persuaded that that's always the case, but that's the way it should be.

And in this case, the objective is to teach the pupil how to live a rich and happy life. That's something we've already commented on on more than one occasion this evening.

This is the objective. This is what David wishes to be the outcome. I think outcome is another buzzword in education. What's the educational outcome? Well, the outcome that is considered here is that those who listen, those who learn, those who participate in this instruction will be able to live a rich and full life.

Now, I think they do probably teach in teacher training college that your outcomes or your objectives should be doable or realistic. And you might think this is a very bold and a very ambitious one.

But this is indeed the objective that is intended. And what do you need to do that you might live such a life? What is it that needs to be done?

[26 : 36] What do you need to do that you would live this rich and full and satisfying life? Well, the answer the psalmist gives is a simple one. The one that is no doubt very deep and needs to be thought about and considered.

But in the terms that is presented, it is a simple one. It is this. You need to fear the Lord. This is the way to richness of life, to a satisfying life, to a blessed life, that you would fear the Lord.

Come, my children. Listen to me. You want to love life? You want to desire? Or you have a desire to see many good days? Well, this is what you must learn. This is what I will teach you that this might happen, that you would fear the Lord.

Now, this is a surprising answer for many. For many, the thought that the road to a full life, to a rich life, to a satisfying life, is the fear of God, is, as I say, an answer that many would find very unsatisfactory.

And many have questioned and doubted and even ridiculed through the centuries. And it has always been so. Even at the very beginning in Eden, this was precisely what the serpent came to the woman and sought to sow doubts in her mind.

[27 : 58] He said, do you really want to live, or worse, to this effect, if you want to live a full life, if you want to have full knowledge, full understanding, then the feet of the Lord, obeying the Lord, isn't the root.

It's disobeying God. That's when you will really live. That's when you will really discover life. Disobey God and live. That's the way to happiness.

That's the way to satisfaction. That's the way to living life to the full. This is the temptation. In the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden, and nothing has changed.

So many today would think it faintly ridiculous that the way to a happy life is to fear God. And yet this is the instruction that David brings, that God brings through David.

And what David does here, he not only indicates that the root to a full and satisfying life is the fear of God, to fear the Lord, he also, in a measure, describes what that looks like.

[29 : 03] You see, we might say, well, yes, to fear God. What does that mean? What does that look like? What does a God-fearing man or a God-fearing woman look like? I wonder what conception you would have.

No doubt in the popular conception, a God-fearing man is an austere, a doer individual who never has any fun, who never smiles, who never laughs.

No doubt that would be the caricature. Perhaps for some, not the caricature, but what they really do think. Well, David here, as it were, in broad brushstrokes, paints a picture of what the God-fearing man looks like.

That's what we have in verses 13 and 14. There are three characteristics of the God-fearing man, of the God-fearing woman presented to us.

And we want to just notice them briefly now. But before we do, before we look at this picture that David paints of the God-fearing man, there are just two general points that I want to make.

[30 : 06] And this, they are as follows. The first one is simply to say that the picture that David paints here of the God-fearing man is not intended to be an exhaustive picture.

He highlights three elements, but it is not, nor is it intended to be exhaustive. And the second thing to say is that what David presents here concerning what you must do in order to live this happy and full life, what you must do that you would indeed be a God-fearing man or woman, what David is presenting is that principle, that wisdom principle that we find so often in the scriptures that in essence is this idea of what you sow, that also shall you reap.

And we're going to come back to that in a moment. But what he's saying is if you live a good life, then things will go well for you. If you do evil, then bad things will happen to you. That's the basic principle. And it may seem somewhat simplistic, and we are going to come back to it in a moment.

But that really is what is being said here. And he presents three things that you should do in order that you would harvest, as it were, this full life, this happy life, this satisfying life.

What are they? These three distinguishing features of the God-fearing man or woman. Verse 13, Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.

[31 : 29] A pure tongue. Now we know, and we're not going to dwell on this, I think we know from personal experience how careless words can be the cause of heartache and pain.

How foolish lies can destroy relationships and mess up our lives and indeed the lives of others. How foul words and unkind words can demean and hurt others.

We know the great damage our tongue can do when we do not follow this instruction. When we don't keep our tongue from evil, when we don't keep our lips from speaking lies, great damage is done, great harm is produced, great suffering follows for ourselves and for others.

And so we might say, well, this is such a simple truth, but it remains a truth. You want to live a full life, a happy life, then don't do these things. Rather, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.

That's the first thing that David presents to us. But the second thing he presents there in what follows, turn from evil and do good. He commends a good life.

[32 : 36] Live a good life. In our, perhaps, evangelical tradition, we sometimes are rather wary of this, but it is repeated so often in the Scriptures, this commendation, this exhortation.

Live a good life. Be a good person. Don't do bad things. What does a good life involve? Well, it involves these two sides of the same coin, as it were, turning from evil and doing good.

Leaving aside that which is wrong, that which is wicked, that which is displeasing to God, and doing that which is pleasing to God, doing good. Now, it's true that in the light of the New Testament, we might say even in the light of the Old Testament, but particularly in the light of the New Testament, we can affirm that this turning from evil and doing good can only be meaningfully achieved as we turn in repentance to the One who can forgive us and enable us to do good, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But this is what David says, if you want to live a good life, then be a good person. Do good things. Don't do bad things. But there's a third element there in what concludes verse 14.

seek peace and pursue it. A God-fearing man, a God-fearing woman, one who would live life to the full, a rich and satisfying life, is one who must have a passion for peace.

[34 : 02] And this would seem to be particularly in the context of our relationships with others, that we would seek, that we would pursue to be at peace with others, even those who don't want to be at peace with us.

That's the emphasis of pursue peace. It's not just something that would be nice, I'd like to be at peace with everybody. Wouldn't that be lovely? No, you have to pursue it, even when you're rejected, even when it's difficult, even when there isn't reciprocity with those for whom you're seeking to achieve that harmonious, that peaceful relationship.

If you do these things, says the psalmist, you will live a happy and fulfilled life. And remember, he speaks with authority.

This is the man who continues stubbornly to seek peace with Saul, even in the face of several attempts on his life. And so I say that even this section is enriched as we consider the one who is speaking.

Here is this man who's trying to kill him, and yet David stubbornly, as it were, continues to long for peace with Saul, to long for reconciliation, to pursue that, in as much as he is able, he will go as far as he can go to achieve this.

[35 : 18] He is one who pursues peace. And so when he says to these men round about him, who are also being chased, and who are also the victims of injustice, he says, pursue peace. They say, well, that's difficult, but if you're willing to do it, well, we'll also try and do it.

But, and we finish with a but. There's always a but, isn't there? There is one final quandary that I just want to notice and comment on in this matter.

The lesson is about how to enjoy a good and full life. The root to that is to fear God. And if we fear God, and if this is reflected in this good life of shunning lies and evil words, of turning from evil and doing good, of pursuing peace, if we do these things, then it will be well with us.

But, some might be already considering or thinking there, it doesn't always follow, though, does it? In the real world, that isn't what always happens.

Sowing obedience doesn't always reap blessing. Sometimes evil follows good. What then? How hard do we understand? Are these lessons lovely in their, in the way in which they sound, but they don't actually work?

[36 : 39] Well, it's very interesting that Peter takes up this matter, this quandary, this difficulty, he takes it up, making reference to this very portion of Scripture.

We've already read in 1 Peter 3. If you turn with it, turn there with me very briefly, to notice the manner in which Peter deals with this quandary, if you wish, this principle that doesn't seem to always work.

It seems to break down. Sometimes you do good, and you're not rewarded. Rather, what you find is, suffering follows from doing that which is right.

And Peter, as I say, deals with it, and he does so, making reference to this very passage. Time doesn't allow us to deal in any depth with this, but just to explain the context of this chapter.

The context is one of persecution. The Christians are being persecuted for their faith. And what does Peter say to them? How does he instruct them? Well, he brings this passage from Psalm 34 to their attention.

[37 : 45] And he quotes it fully, these verses. Indeed, more than the verses we've been considering. And what does he draw from that? How does he follow on from quoting these verses in verses 10 to 12 of 1 Peter 3?

Well, in verse 13, he repeats that historic principle, that principle that David is expounding. He says, who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?

He says, if you do good, if you live a good life, then it will go well with you. People won't harm you if you are a good person and seeking to do good to others. Precisely what David has been teaching in this portion of the psalm.

And so he reinforces it. He says, I agree with that. That's the way it is. That is a sound principle. But in verse 14, what does Peter do? He says, but even if you should suffer what is right, you are blessed.

He says, it doesn't always work that way. I recognize that sometimes, even though you do good and you endeavor to live this good life, there can be bad consequences for you.

[38 : 52] That is true. That does sometimes happen. It doesn't negate the basic principle, but it is a recognition that there are, if you wish, exceptions in this sin-sick world.

But what does Peter say? He doesn't say, well, isn't that a pity? But what can we do? No, he gives instruction as to what you should do in those circumstances. But even if you should suffer what is right, you are blessed.

And he doesn't elaborate what he means by that, but I think it's reasonable to understand that what he's saying is that if you do what is right, if you're loyal to God, if you fear God, even when things work out badly for you, well, you are especially blessed.

God is particularly pleased with you. He looks down and he smiles upon you. Here is my servant. He's doing what is good. He's steadfastly rejecting what is evil, even when everything goes haywire.

Well, I am so pleased with you, my child, for your loyalty and for your commitment to me that even in these circumstances, you are blessed. You will be rewarded.

[39 : 55] Your faithfulness does not go unnoticed in heaven. And so you are blessed. But Peter says something else, as if to say, well, whatever else you do, do this.

Then in verse 15, but in your heart set apart Christ as Lord. Even when the principles that you've been taught from your childhood don't seem to work, and things don't work out as you thought they were meant to work out, do this one thing.

Do this one thing. Set apart Christ in your heart as Lord. If you do that, you can be sure that the Lord will order all of these things for your good.

Well, no doubt much more could be said on this matter, but we'll leave it there for the moment. But as we do, draw things to a close. School is back. And I ask you, what kind of teacher are you?

Those of you who are engaged in one manner or another, in one context or another, in teaching, how do you do so? Are you characterized by what God would have in teachers after His own heart?

[41 : 03] A love for those you teach, an authority in instructing the matters that you instruct in. What kind of pupil are you? Is there in you this desire to live life to the full?

Is there in you a willingness, a humility that is willing to be taught? Maybe from sources that you had often thought irrelevant or had cast aside in the past, and now what you have to do is, in humility, say, well, I will listen.

I will consider what the Bible has to say. I will consider what Jesus has to say. I want to live this life, this full life, this rich life, and I will humbly sit at the feet of the Master to hear what He has to teach me.

Will you learn the lesson? Do you love life and desire to see many good days? Then keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies.

Turn from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. Let us pray. Lord, Lord,