

EXTENDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD...ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Celebrating
60 YEARS

ONE-TO-ONE

© WINTER 2015



GRIP

THROUGH IT!

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From the Editor

“What does your bracelet say?” The young lady cashier at the Atlanta-area store was looking curiously at the orange bracelet on my wrist. It’s a question I get a lot lately. “It says, *‘Embracing the Truth with Our Lives,’*” I explained. She cocked her head, so I continued, “I wear it to identify with and raise awareness about the Christians worldwide who



are being persecuted for their faith, especially in places like Iraq and Syria where they are being beheaded by ISIS terrorists.”

She gave me an uncomfortable look. “Oh. Well. I don’t really watch the news, mainly because of stuff like that.”

In the Tennessee mountains, I got a much different response from some bikers down from Pennsylvania. They noticed my orange t-shirt and said, “What’s that all about?” I told them about

persecuted Christians, and they said, “Yeah, man, that’s really an awful situation. Good shirt.” When I told them to have a good ride, they said, “We’re riding with JESUS!”

According to Open Doors International, there has never been worse worldwide persecution of Christians at any time in modern history. In some places in the Middle East, we’ve seen photos and videos of

Christians dressed in prison orange being marched to their deaths. But even in places like Oregon and South Carolina, we’ve seen Christians specifically targeted and murdered in 2015.

TRUTH AND MERCY

To those in the dark, in deception, or denial, the truth is painful, not popular. But God’s truth is His mercy to those who are perishing. His Word

is the way of deliverance and salvation. Speaking the truth in love is the mission given to all followers of Jesus. Our call is to be faithful, not acclaimed. We see from the example of our brothers and sisters that faithfulness can bring opposition and comes at great cost.

At CSM, we’ve never been “good” at marketing or gimmicks. But we do feel a great passion about raising awareness of the worldwide genocide against

EMBRACING THE TRUTH WITH OUR LIVES

Identifying with persecuted Christians and their message

BY STEPHEN SIMPSON

Christians happening right now. We cannot count on much of the American “mainstream” media to accurately or adequately tell the story. Even many popular preachers and religious celebrities seem to shy away from this (and any other controversial) issue. We’ve got to tell the story ... CSM and you.

One way we are raising awareness is our orange “Embracing the Truth with Our Lives” t-shirts and bracelets. You can find more information about how to get yours on our website: csmpublishing.org. A portion of our sales will go to support persecuted Christians.

We identify, not only with our brothers and sisters, but also with their cause. We must be faithful in our spheres of influence to speak the truth in love, to share the Gospel of Jesus, and never be ashamed of Him. We must pray for those who are in chains and remember them and their families in our support. Finally, let us also pray that out from among the persecutors themselves, there might come salvation and deliverance; who knows, perhaps the next Apostle Paul will come from their midst? **121**

Keynote

ADVERSITY CAN BE OPPORTUNITY WHEN WE MOVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

DOWN THROUGH IT!

BY CHARLES SIMPSON



Andrae Crouch wrote a beautiful and theologically accurate song, “Through it All,” which says, in part, “I’ve learned to trust in Jesus, I’ve learned to trust in God.” The entire song is the theme of what I want to convey. We can grow through trials—not just in spite of them but because of them.

Our daughter and son-in-law work with children in Costa Rica. The youngest foster child is Cristal, who turned 3 years old during our recent visit. She announced, “I am no longer a baby; I am a short woman!” Cristal reflected a very basic human desire to grow up. It is normal to desire to grow. There comes a time when physical growth ceases, but spiritual and other kinds of growth must continue.

How does spiritual growth happen? Does it come through mere knowledge or is there more to it? Do stress, obstacles, and opposition play a role in our growth?

By most accounts we live in stressful times. International and political news concern most of us, as do economic issues and terrorism. Add to those issues our personal challenges that involve family, friends, and jobs ... there is a lot of stress!

My question is this: must we always view difficulty as a problem? Can we use it as motivation to grow? Jesus desires for us righteousness,

peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Can stress actually be a signal that the Lord is calling us to a better place and using it as our motivation? (See Matthew 11:30.)

Remember, stress is not a new phenomenon, nor is it only our own personal situation. Stress began in the Garden of Eden amid human failure, with temptation, blame, family issues, and ejection from home. Consider the stress endured by

**"GREATNESS
USUALLY EMERGES
IN TIMES OF GREAT
STRESS WHEN PEOPLE
GROW THROUGH IT."**

Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. Greatness usually emerges in times of great stress when people grow through it.

A favorite example is Winston Churchill, who led England during two terrible years when that nation stood alone against Adolf Hitler and his brutal bombing campaigns. Churchill and the survivors did not give up; they grew to face the challenge.

PERSONAL GROWTH

One reason that I love Andrae Crouch’s song is that I can remember times when I was moved to trust in Jesus

through difficulty. At age 17, I was running from God’s call. Later, at age 25, I was studying Greek and Hebrew in seminary, commuting 1000 miles a week and having “panic attacks.” I eventually came to understand that God had something better for me and was motivated to seek Him. We can grow through it.

Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and favor. Hebrews 5:8 says that He learned obedience through what he suffered. Then He tells us, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (see John 16:33). In Him, we too can overcome the world and grow.

The scriptures are filled with texts that instruct us how to grow. These tell us that our ascended Lord gave various leadership gifts to equip us to grow together. Ephesians 4:14 says “Be no longer children.” The apostle Peter calls us to “grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus” (see 2 Peter 3:18). The apostle Paul mentioned that the Thessalonians grew in faith (see 2 Thessalonians 1:3). In Philippians 1:9, that church was told to grow in love. All of these references to growth occurred in stressful times. In what areas are the Lord calling us to grow?

Job’s wife told him, amid all of their challenges, to “curse God and die!” That would bring stress to any marriage! But Job grew through it to eventually enter a much better comprehension of God and a better place in life. If you are married, that is a good place to grow!

A deeper trust in God, faith, and obedience to His guidance will take us beyond what is presently causing fear, anxiety, or other maladies. Growing through it all will enable us to help others grow through their trials (see 2 Corinthians 1:4).

CHURCH GROWTH

Jesus said, “I will build My Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). He said that His Church would grow through its hellish opposition, and it has. The Church is growing most where it is opposed most in places such as China, Russia, northern Africa, and the Middle East. It is in decline where it is the most comfortable.

Should we pray for opposition and persecution? No, but we should use the adversity or pain that we do have as motivation to grow. Real Church growth is when the people grow and expand their influence out into the culture where they model how to handle life’s challenges—with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The Church gives us seed; the world is the field where we sow our seed (see Matthew 13:38).

Church growth is a big topic and should be. The New Testament shows us that Church growth has to be more than meeting growth or Sunday growth. The ultimate

test of our growth will be our obedience to God in daily life and our impact upon the “the gates of Hell.” Growth in attendance is good if it produces growth in impact upon the kingdom of darkness. If the Church is a mere audience that enjoys the meeting, it is deceived.

In my view, cultural opposition will sort out real growth from the appearance of growth. That has been the case in persecuted areas. Some wither beneath the sun, some are choked by cares of life, and some bear fruit. Fruit-bearers grow through the difficulties and opposition. They learn to persevere and rise above it.

If Christ functioned in an hostile environment but overcame opposition, should not His body in our time do the same? Let’s look at His message to that world in which He lived, and the world in which we live.

KINGDOM GROWTH

The message of Jesus was and is the “Kingdom of God” (see Matthew 4:17). The Church that He built and is building is established on the message of His Kingdom, His government from heaven to earth. The good news is that through it all, He reigns. He reigns in heaven, in us, in the Church, and our prayer is that His kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven (see Matthew 6:9-13). Jesus said that the Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in all nations (see Matthew 24:14). All nations would have the opportunity

to receive His kingdom and His Kingdom would increase.

The prophet Isaiah declared that the government would be upon His shoulders and that there would be no end to the increase of His government and peace (see Isaiah 9:6-7). It is His government that brings peace. He said, “In the world you will have tribulation”; but we are not of the world. We have been baptized out of the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of Christ where we have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (see Colossians 1:13; Romans 14:17). Our King has overcome death, hell, and the judgment. In Him we are more than conquerors (see 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 8:35-39).

It is His government in our lives by the Holy Spirit that makes us more than conquerors, not our own means. The increase that Isaiah 9:6-7 mentions is the increase of His government and peace; we have His peace. World circumstances have never produced peace, nor will they ever.

While we are not of the world, we are in the world and sent into the world (see John 17). Kingdom citizens are not withdrawn or passive. We are called to attack the gates of hell. Capitulation and passivity are ungodly and will result in defeat. If you leave evil alone it will not leave you alone. We cannot overcome what we refuse to recognize! The evil hatred of righteousness is epitomized in the Crucifixion of Jesus. Evil is aggressive, taking every opportunity to destroy righteousness. In

the face of evil, the “snooze button” is not your friend.

BUT HOW?

What I will describe here is how we as believers should engage opposition, not how governments should. Governments have an obligation to protect constituents whether they are civil or spiritual governments. Fathers are responsible to protect families and shepherds protect flocks (see Romans 13). But as followers of Jesus, our instructions are not about self-protection. This is the challenging part. We overcome by the blood of Jesus, the word of our testimony, and loving not our lives unto death (see Revelation 12:11). The defense of self, fear, and anxiety have no place in the Kingdom mind or heart.

The disciples boldly declared the truth of Christ’s reign, but not in their own strength or zeal. They stood and spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit, then willingly paid the price.

Our sword is the Word of God, not the arm of flesh (see John 18:11). There have been times that I forgot that or wished it to be otherwise. As we war against our own flesh and the spiritual powers, we are told to love our enemies and forgive them as Jesus did at the Cross. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God (see James 1:20).

The Sermon on the Mount (which Bob Mumford called “The Constitution of the Kingdom”) instructs us to engage the world in humility, under discipline, hungering for righteousness ourselves, in mercy, with a pure heart, and desire for peace. Then accept the tribulation which may still follow, forgiving and loving our enemies, then being willing to do good to them.

Did I say it would be a challenge? In ourselves this is impossible! In the Holy Spirit, it will make us more than conquerors.

anxiety. If comfort and image are our primary concerns, we will withdraw from the battle and remain passive. If we follow Jesus, the captain of God’s army, we will do it His way and we will see the increase of His government and His peace.

Will it cost? Of course it will. But the rewards of spiritual growth will bring us into a new place in Christ and a new power in the world.

God bless you as you consider these things. 121

- **WE ARE BORN WITH A DESIRE TO GROW.**
- **WE LIVE IN STRESSFUL TIMES THAT OFFER US THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW.**
- **OUR FIRST GROWTH MUST BE PERSONAL.**
- **WHEN DISCIPLES TRULY GROW, THE CHURCH WILL GROW IN INFLUENCE UPON CULTURE.**
- **THE CHURCH’S MESSAGE IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS INCREASING.**
- **WE ARE CALLED TO ENGAGE THE CULTURE.**



CONCLUSION

If we face our issues, personal and cultural, in the Spirit, we will overcome through Christ’s blood, His Word and laying down our lives. We cannot defeat hell carrying double mindedness, fear, and

CHARLES SIMPSON is Editor-in-Chief of *One-to-One Magazine*. He ministers extensively throughout the United States and among the nations. In 2015, he celebrated 60 years of ministry.





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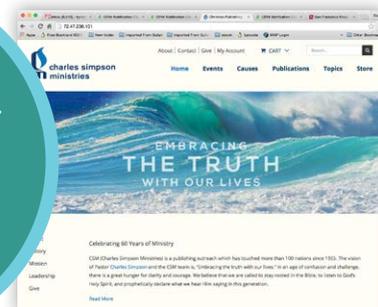
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Familygram

Heaven and Cake

Lessons about eternity from Aunt Eleanore



by Stephen Simpson

Many of our longtime friends know my Aunt Eleanore. She is my late mother's younger sister, and has dealt with autism all of her life. Through the years, we've discovered that she has a very unique perspective on the world and we are still learning how to flow with what she is seeing.

Sometimes, life is very difficult for her. For several months now, she has been recovering from a fractured tibia and also wrestling with heart issues. It has been an emotional time as well. It is not for me to discuss here all that she battles, but she has some hard days. But on other days, she is bright and sunny.

Her memory and vocabulary are both very highly developed. Though she is 72, in many ways, she is very much like a small child. But in it all, I'm regularly amazed at how much she teaches us. She has a lot on her mind recently, thinking about some friends and family members who have passed away. This has, in turn, prompted her to think about Heaven. She loves Jesus and knows many Scriptures. She loves to hear hymns and goes to worship services often.

HEROES IN HEAVEN

Just days before my Mom's birthday, as I was taking Aunt Eleanore to the doctor, she said that God had told her what Heaven is like. "Tell me about it," I asked. She said, "It's going to be like a big family reunion up there. I asked God how they celebrate my sister's birthday in Heaven. And He told me they make a big delicious cake and share it around with EVERYBODY! And everyone is smiling and laughing and eating cake!"

I told her I hope she is right, and she said, "Oh, I KNOW I am right!" She was so sweet and happy about it that it made me smile through some tears.

Then she said, "Tell me about Ken Sumrall." I asked, "What do you want to know about Brother Ken?" She said, "He is in Heaven, isn't he?" I said he was and asked if she remembered him.

"Oh, yes, he was a Pastor. He was your Daddy's Pastor, wasn't he?"

"Yes, that's right."

"And he was your Daddy's good friend?"

"He sure was."

"And your Daddy loved him?"

"Very much, and Dad misses him."

"Stephen, did you love Brother Ken?"

"Yes, I loved him and he is one of my heroes."

"Well ... Stephen, he is one of my heroes, too. I think there are a lot of heroes in Heaven!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"It sure must be getting crowded up there. I think I know lots of people there."

"Yes, ma'am, we have a lot of folks we love who are already there."

"My Mama and Daddy

and your Mama. Grandpa and Grandma Simpson and Uncle Riley and John Duke and Nanny Duke are there too!"

"That's right. They sure are."

"And Jesus," she reminded me.

"Yes, ma'am, and Jesus."

"Heaven is a family reunion!"

WE HAVE HOPE

In the passing of Christian friends and relatives, especially those who were older, I often have been



struck by their sense of eternity; not dread, but anticipation of seeing the Lord and loved ones. My Grandma, mother to my Mom and to Aunt Eleanore, told me often, "I can't wait to see Jesus and my husband and my Mama and Daddy. I can't wait to see my daughter. I am looking forward to it!" She would enthusiastically sing, "YES, We'll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river!"

When my Grandpa, my Dad's father, passed away, I was with him and it was one of the most peaceful, holy moments I have

ever experienced. The presence and glory of God was thick in the room. There was no fear or even tears; only awe.

Paul wrote to the believers in Thessalonica and said, "I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).

Scripture doesn't say that we do not grieve when loved ones pass; it says we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Even in our sorrow, we have a Blessed Hope of eternity with Jesus and with those who "sleep in" Him.

This year, we've said farewell to loved ones, young and old, who journeyed into eternity. Some were very outspoken and clear in their faith; about others, we may wonder concerning their relationship with the Lord. Yet, I have learned that some people who did not seem outwardly religious or spiritual did have their moments in life of crying out to the Lord. I choose to believe that God honors that. Eternity is a mystery, and remains in His hands.

I am hopeful that the Lord will give me more years here on this earth; and pray especially that He will grant long life and good health to those that I love.

But talking with Aunt Eleanore reminded me that our Heavenly home is a place of great joy and love. It's a family reunion. And, maybe, cake! 121

STEPHEN SIMPSON is the Editor of *One-to-One Magazine* and the President of CSM. For information on speaking availability, please call (251) 633-7900 or e-mail onetresteve@bellsouth.net. You can also follow him on Twitter @BamaStephen.



Faith

THE HOW TO FIND HOPE AND STRENGTH
TO OVERCOME LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

IMMOVABLE

by James Ryle

MAN



“AND SEE, NOW I GO BOUND IN THE SPIRIT TO JERUSALEM, NOT KNOWING THE THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME THERE, EXCEPT THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT TESTIFIES IN EVERY CITY, SAYING THAT CHAINS AND TRIBULATIONS AWAIT ME. BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME; NOR DO I COUNT MY LIFE DEAR TO MYSELF, SO THAT I MAY FINISH MY RACE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY WHICH I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY TO THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD” (ACTS 20:22-24, NKJV).

Emerson said, “The hero is no braver than the ordinary man; he just fights five minutes longer.” Perseverance in the face of difficulty is a quality that is indispensable in the lives of those who leave a lasting mark on this world.

Paul was a man of indefatigable resilience. In his own words, which are filled with a passionate faith as he surveys the gloomy prospects of impending persecution, he says, “None of these things move me.”

FORWARD IN FAITHFULNESS

Consider all that Paul endured as he pressed forward in faithfulness to Christ. Here is his own testimony:

“I’ve worked much harder, been jailed more often, beaten up more times than I can count, and at death’s door time after time. I’ve been flogged five times with the Jews’ thirty-nine lashes, beaten by Roman rods three times, pummeled with rocks once. I’ve been shipwrecked three times, and immersed in the open sea for a night and a day.

“In hard traveling year in and year out, I’ve had to ford rivers, fend off robbers, struggle with friends, struggle with foes. I’ve been at risk in the city, at risk in the

country, endangered by desert sun and sea storm, and betrayed by those I thought were my brothers.

“I’ve known drudgery and hard labor, many a long and lonely night without sleep, many a missed meal, blasted by the cold, naked to the weather. And that’s not the half of it, when you throw in the daily pressures and anxieties of all the churches.” (2 Corinthians 11:23-28, The Message).

It strikes with a sense of profound sobriety how none of these things fit with the happy American Gospel we hear blathered from so many pulpits today.

Today’s preachers promise wealth and happiness, and a life free from pain and suffering. They wink at sin, and avoid controversy at all cost. They are soft as marshmallows....and equally as tasteless.

Theodore Roosevelt said, “There has never yet been a man in our history who led a life of ease whose name is worth remembering.” The Psalmist said it best, “Thou hast enlarged me in distress” (Psalm 4:1). Paul was one such man who found God’s strength in trials.

SECRET OF PREVAILING FAITH

What was the secret of his prevailing faith; how was he able to persevere with so much dead set against him?

He himself tells us the answer. As we read his own words we discover four distinguishing characteristics that stand out—charting for each one of us today the pathway through our own difficult challenges.

#1 HE HAD CONVICTION OF SPIRIT

"I go bound in the spirit," he said. The word means to be irrevocably resolved in commitment to the present course of action. There is finality to the conviction Paul possessed. He was a man "bound in chains" from which there was no escape neither offered...nor desired. Any appeal made to Paul by his friends, urging him to take it easy, fell powerless to the ground. Something far more powerful held him firm to his dangerous course of action. "I go bound in the spirit," he said.

#2 HE HAD COURAGE OF HEART "Not knowing what will happen to me there, except that bonds and afflictions await me." It takes a man or woman of immeasurable courage to walk headlong into open hostility. Those who seek a life of ease will never reach the heights of glory gained by those who press upward against great oppositions.

#3 HE HAD COMPOSURE OF MIND "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself." Here we see the true

magnificence of a selfless man. Paul was not looking for a chance to advance his career, bulk up his portfolio, sweep the competition, nor leave his mark in the Vaulted Halls of Man's Celebrated Giants. Something higher and far nobler had captured his imagination. He had set his thoughts upon heaven, and the honor of the name of Jesus. And, though dismissed by the world as a fool with a misspent life, he is now cheered in the realms of glory as the Great Apostle of Grace.

ARE YOU IMMOVABLE?

1. CONVICTION OF SPIRIT.
2. COURAGE OF HEART.
3. COMPOSURE OF MIND.
4. CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE.

#4 HE HAD CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE

"That I may finish my race with joy." And what a race he ran! Through valleys and over hills; in the thick of the woods, and out in the open meadows; upon rocky terrain, and across the hot desert sands—he ran with faith, and finished with perseverance. Such is the internal power of a prevailing purpose in life. I once read that a man can stand almost anything except a succession of ordinary days.

My friend, in what ways can you benefit by Paul's example as

you face your own challenges in today's world? How might his words find a place in your life, and embolden you to rise in a new resolve of faithfulness—even if it's against all odds?

Can we count on you to be an immovable man....and immovable woman? These are the soldiers we need on the front lines. **121**



JAMES RYLE Just as we were finalizing this issue, James Ryle went home to be with the Lord. We honor his life and pray for his loved ones. He was involved in public speaking since 1972, serving as pastor of two churches, chaplain for the University of Colorado football team, and ministering as an evangelist, Bible teacher and popular conference speaker throughout the Nation and abroad. James was a best-selling author, and a contributor to both the *NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible*, and the *NIV Worship Leader's Bible*.

He was one of the founding Board members of Promise Keepers, and has spoken at multiple PK stadium events around the country. On October 4, 1997 in the Nation's Capitol, James delivered the Gospel message at Stand in the Gap ~ an event attended by over 1.4 million men, and broadcast to over 20 different nations around the world.

Please pray for James' wife, Belinda, and their four adult children.

Great Resources



**Wear your ORANGE.
Pray for the persecuted.**

CSM is encouraging all Christians to wear orange in honor of believers who are being tortured and murdered for their faith. Now, we want to publicly identify with them, to raise awareness and to be reminded of our own call to be faithful in our own culture, wherever we go.

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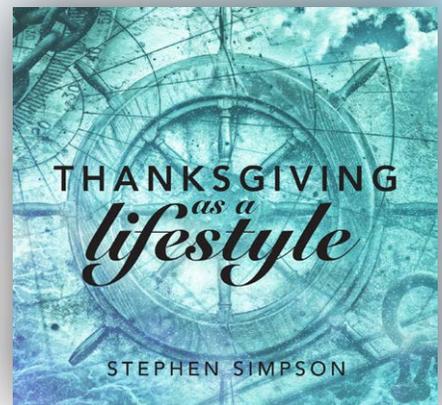
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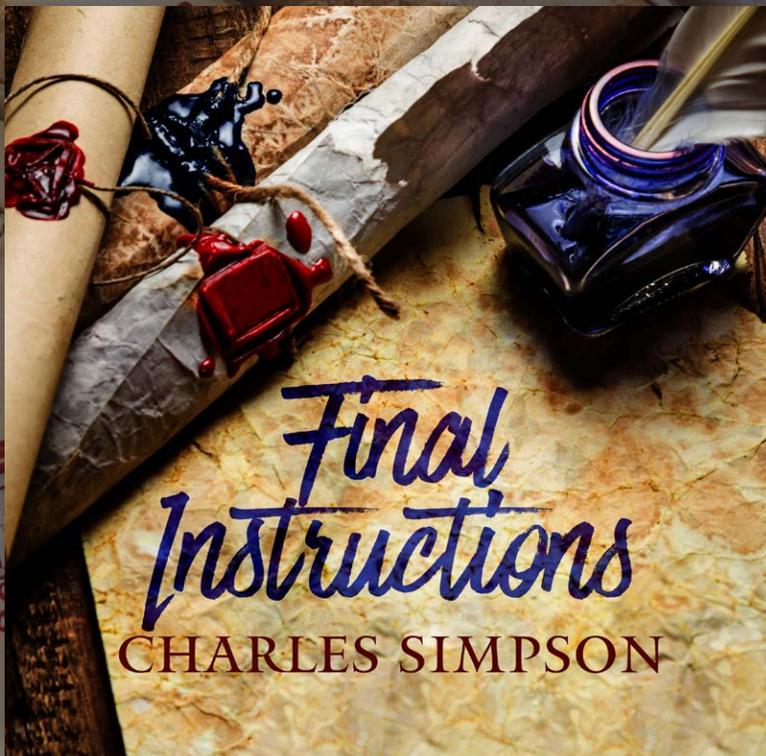
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FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

A NEW MESSAGE BY CHARLES SIMPSON

The last recorded words of the apostle Paul were instructions to a young leader, Timothy. While Paul was writing to Timothy, he was also speaking to all of us. Paul warns why “perilous times” have come and addresses what all of us should be and what all of us should be doing in these trying times. This is a very clear word to believers, and a very important one in describing the difference between the culture of God’s people and that of the unbelieving world.

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