NOTES ON LESSON FOR SUNDAY, April 5, 1964. SELECTIONS FROM PAUL'S PRISON EPISTLES.
TITLE: PAUL THE PRISONER

EPHESIANS 6:10-17

1. In the preceeding eight verses (Ephesians 6:10-17) we have set forth the power, the armour, and the foes of the Christian warrior. Consider:
   1. The warrior's power.
      1. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Eph. 6:10
         (a) The might is Christ's, but by faith it becomes our strength.
         (2) To be strong is our duty; to be weak is our sin.
   2. The warrior's armour. Eph. 6:11,13-17.
      1; Put on an armour for life is a battle field; not a scene of soft enjoyment and ease.
   3. The warrior's foes. Eph 6:12; Matthew 10:36
      1. Not especially against flesh and blood which denotes weakness.
      2. This then would mean that our foes are not weak but are powerful.
      3. Satan is the prince (power) of this world (John 12:31) andthe god of this world also (2 Cor. 4:4).
      4. Satan uses for his dominion wicked men, and his sway is darkness rather than light.

2. The successful Army.
   1. The successful army consists of men who not only have armour, but men who have been trained to use that ramour.
   2. An unarmed army may be good at strutting in parade, but unarmed it can only be food for the enemy's artillery, material for a dreadful massacre.

3. The successful Christian.
   1. He must be properly armed and know how to make good use of his armour.
   2. He must know that it is not an easy life for the successful Christian.
      (1) Nature cries out for an easy life, for a truce with the world, the devil, and the flesh.
   3. He must know that in this sense his motto must be war, not peace. It is in this sense that Jesus said, I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34

EPHESIANS 6:18-20

1. Paul a prisoner of war. Captured by his enemy. Now in prison at Rome.
   1. Paul describes himself as "an ambassador in bonds." Eph. 6:20
   2. Paul was not an Ordinary Ambassador (simply a messanger of his government) but he was an Extraordinary Ambassador, a minister of high rank, sent on a mission by the highest Sovereign among men: Christ and his gospel.

2. We are Ambassadors of high rank. 2 Cor. 5:20; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

3. The work of an ambassador.
   1. NEGATIVE
      (1) Ambassadors do not originate their message.
      (2) They must not think lightly of their mission.
      (3) They are not to seek their own glory.
      (4) They must not aim at their own comfort and pleasure as a chief object.
      (5) They must not depart from their own instructions. Not to add to them nor to take away. Rev. 22:18, 19
   2. POSITIVE
      (1) Ambassadors must go where they are sent.
      (2) They are to communicate the mind of their Lord...not their own mind.
      (3) They must be qualified for their work and endeavour to do their work.
4. The Ambassador, his message, how delivered.
   1. He is speaking the mind of God in behalf of Christ.
   2. He must deliver his message with courtesy.
   3. He must deliver his message with intense earnestness. It is momentous.
   4. He must deliver his message with zealous pleading. Issues depend upon its acceptance or rejection

5. The position of the Ambassador.
   1. An ambassador is usually one accredited to a power sovereign and equal to that from which he comes. Not so in this case:
      (1) Ambassadors of Christ, ministers of the gospel, address themselves to offenders.
      (2) Ambassadors of Christ, ministers of the gospel of Christ, represent the offended (Christ) to the offender.
      (3) As in the case of Paul, the offenders sometime become hostile when the ambassador for Christ has offered the terms upon whibh the offender may receive the offer of Divine mercy. Paul is now in prison.

6. Prayer for an ambassador in bond, chains, fetters, requested.
   1. THE DUTY OF PRAYER ENJOINED
      (1) "Praying always with all prayer."
         A. No period of life should be with out prayer: youth, middle life, old age.
         B. No condition of life should be without prayer: Adversity, prosperity, sunshine, desolation, under sore temptation, under important duty: What duty is more important than the Christian life in spreading the gospel of Christ? Under all changing circumstances of life. Maybe expressed in these words of an old song:

"Go, when the morning shineth;
Go when the noon is bright;
Go, when the day declineth;
Go, in the hush of night."

7. Paul did not ask the Ephesians to pray for:
   1. Temporal blessings for him such as food, clothing, money with which he might obtain release from prison.
   2. His thorn in the flesh was not mentioned. 2 Cor. 12:7-10

8. What Paul did ask the Ephesians to pray for:
   1. "That utterance may be given unto me,"
   2. "That I may open my mouth boldly,"
   3. "To make known the mystery of the gospel."
   4. "That there-in I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Eph. 6:19, 20

9. The three objects of prayer in Paul's request.
   1. All saints; "Watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints
   2. For any and all men in trouble: In Rome Paul found comfort from the prayers of the Christians in Asia.
   3. For the spread of the gospel: Paul was not so anxious that prayer should be offered for the alleviation of his harsh imprisonment, for safe deliverance from the hands of his foes, as he was for grace to be faithful and bold in his declaration of the gospel of Christ. This is a great example of a noble, self-forgetful request.