Getting Your Gospel Grammar Right --Indicatives and Imperatives

In order to get our gospel grammar right, we must understand the basic and profound difference in Scripture between:

**God's indicatives:** His statements of fact of what is. His provisions of grace. What enables us to do His will. It is who we are and what resources we have. It is the fuel in the tank. It is the weapons to make war.

**God's imperatives:** His statements of what we are to do. His commands --do this, fight this enemy, and be like Christ in your role as male and female.

Indicatives- Provisions you have to accomplish what you should do.

Imperatives- What you should do.

Within this framework of getting our gospel grammar right, the pattern of Scripture is always that indicatives are followed by imperatives, when addressing the lives of God's people.

The indicatives which describe God's provisions for us, in Christ, form the basis and the framework for the imperatives which direct us how we are to live for Christ or which direct us into a life well pleasing to Christ.

The indicatives of grace form the basis and the framework, by which we accomplish the imperatives of grace.

The indicatives of grace form the enabling, the equipping, and the capacity to accomplish the imperatives of grace. The imperative can be to put sin to death, resist the devil, manifest Christ-likeness in positive graces, obey a duty, repent of sin, believe a promise for all grace —even repentance and faith are found in Him. We are complete in Him.

Now because this is God's chosen way of applying His ongoing grace to His believing people, it is crucial that we get our Gospel grammar right. There are two considerations to this:

(1) Three Major Samplings of the Biblical evidence for this assertion.

On what basis is the assertion made that you and I must understand that God's indicatives are the basis of His imperatives? Here is the first sampling of the biblical evidence for the assertion that the pattern in Scripture is that Indicatives are followed by imperatives when addressing the lives of God's people.

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a) The contents and the structure of the book of Romans.

Consider this question: Without changing one God-inspired word in the book of Romans, without taking out or adding any words, would the book of Romans be the Word of God to us, if we lifted Romans 12-16, and put it before Romans 1-5? What if the book of Romans started with 12:1? "I beseech ye, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Would that be the Word of God to us in the book of Romans? No, it wouldn't, because not only the content of the book in Romans is divinely inspired, but the structure also comes with divine inspiration and with divine wisdom.

When we pick up Paul's letter to the Romans, after the opening words of general greeting in 1: 1-15, we are confronted with the theme of the book in verses 16 and 17. The Apostle says, 16 “I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein (within that gospel) is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, but the righteous shall live by faith.”

After Paul states that his theme is this gospel that reveals the righteousness of God, he doesn't open up that concept of the righteousness of God until 3:21. Paul gives us the bad news of everyone's desperate condition of being under God's wrath and the universal need for people to come out from under that position of being under the wrath of God. From 1:18 all the way through chapter 3:20, Paul demonstrates, by a string of indicatives, man's universal need for the Gospel; this Gospel that holds out a way of escape, a way of being right with God, that comes from God, that satisfies God, and is received by faith alone. There are no imperatives in chapter 1, chapter 2, or chapter 3. Then starting in verse 21 of chapter 3, he begins to set forth God's provision of this righteousness contained in the Gospel and he opens up that truth all the way through to the end of 5:21. The provision of righteousness is to be found in the Person and work of Jesus, the second Adam. God has provided a way of right-standing with Him and a right-standing received by faith and faith alone, but you won't find one imperative from 3:21 to the end of chapter 3, all of chapter 4, and all of chapter 5. God's not telling us anything to do. He is demonstrating the utter futility of getting right with Him by a works-based system or trying to get right with Him by our own efforts and righteousness. The only way to obtain the righteousness provided by God is to believe on His Son as did David and as did Abraham. They were justified by faith alone apart from the works of the law.
Some people were taking Paul's words and twisting them by reasoning this way, "Well, because this salvation is one in which where sin abounds, grace does much more abound, let the sinner raise a mountain of sin ten thousand feet high because God's grace raises a higher mountain of forgiveness and righteousness." So the question is raised in 6:1, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" May it never be." Then Paul gives another string of indicatives. Romans 6:3 "Don't you know, that all of us who were baptized, united to Christ, were baptized into His death?" He gives a whole string of indicatives. We have been buried with Christ. We have been raised with Christ, and then the first imperative in the entire letter comes in 6:11. "Even so, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." No imperatives until 6:11. Why? Because God wants us to know, to understand.

The indicatives of grace, because they form the basis and the framework, of the imperatives of grace.

The indicatives of grace form the enabling, the equipping, and the capacity to accomplish the imperatives of grace. The imperative can be: to put sin to death, resist the devil, manifest Christ-likeness in positive graces, obey a duty, repent of sin, believe a promise for all grace even repentance and faith are found in Him. We are complete in him.

The indicatives of grace form the basis and the framework to accomplish the imperatives of grace. You are (that's an indicative) dead to sin, you are (indicative) alive to God, now live (imperative) in the light of it. You are - that's an indicative, now do because of what you are - that's an imperative. The emphasis of the Bible is we have all in Christ, but we must experience more and more of what is already ours in Him. We became equipped at the moment of our conversion. Paul is telling those Christians at Rome, 'Look, you don't need some coat of many colors experience, a second work of grace, a baptism in the Spirit, or speaking in tongues, you need to have a Spirit-wrought understanding of what is already yours in Christ.' Paul goes on through chapter 6 with another string of indicatives showing we've had a change of masters followed by some imperatives --what we are to do in the light of this change of master. Because of the result of what God has done in changing our natures (indicative) from sin being our master, we can serve God and righteousness (imperative).

Romans 6:17, "But thanks be to God, that, whereas you were servants of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto you were delivered; and being made free from sin, you became servants of righteousness." I.

Paul presents more indicatives in chapters 7 and 8 --we're freed from the tyranny and oppressive condemning power of the Law. We are introduced into life in the Spirit and into the inviolable (unchangeable, secure from violation) salvation from which nothing can separate us. Then, in chapters 9-11, more indicatives, how this salvation is come to people in the sweep of redemptive history with Israel, and then the message of God's grace going out to the Gentiles. You come through eleven chapters, and your head is bursting with all the things that God says are true, of every believer in Christ. But when we start reading chapters 12, 13, 14, and 15, we have a glut of imperatives. Command after command after command: touching every facet of life --interpersonal relationships, relationship to the state, relationships within the church, relationship to our brothers and sisters.

What is God saying to us in the structure as well as the content in the book of Romans? This is what He's saying: *The indicatives, which describe your provisions in Christ, form the basis and the framework to accomplish the imperatives, which direct us into a life well pleasing to Christ.

**The indicatives, which describe your provisions in Christ, equip us and enable us to carry out the imperatives, which direct us into a life well pleasing to Christ.

Don't treat that lightly. Don't trivialize it. It is absolutely crucial to your Christian experience, and walk with God.

b) a second sampling in the book of Ephesians.

Will the structure of the book of Ephesians bear out the assertion that the indicatives that describe God's provision for us in Christ form the basis and the framework for the imperatives, which direct us how we are to live a life well pleasing to Christ? The book of Ephesians is generally divided into chapters 1-3 and 4-6. Consider this question again. Without disturbing one God-inspired word, if we were to pick up chapters 4, 5, and 6 and reverse their place in the book with the first 3 chapters, would that be the Word of God? No. It would not be the Word of God because it would start with imperatives. Ephesians 4:1, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord (Paul says) beseech you to walk worthy of the calling wherewith you were called." Then he gives imperatives touching our life together in the church, imperatives touching our life in the context of a godless society from which God has delivered us, imperatives regarding our lives in relationship to our wives, our husband, and our children, masters, and servants. It would not be the Word of God if it came with all those Gospel imperatives without the blessed foundation of the Gospel indicatives. Remember, Paul was no stranger to the situation at Ephesus. He had labored there longer than in any other place in his apostolic and missionary ministry. He
knew the demonic powers that oppressed the people of God. He refers to them in chapter 6, 6:12 "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." He knew all about the immoral context in which those people had to live out a life of purity and holiness. Does he start right in saying, deal with the immoral patterns of your past, deal with the . . .? No. How does he start out? He starts out with an eulogy. In 1:3-14, he starts out praising the triune God for His magnificent salvation in Jesus Christ. Then he launches into a prayer, in 1:15-17, and do you know what his prayer is? He's not praying that they'll get any new experience. He's praying that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened—that they might know their indicatives; that they might know what God has already given them in Christ; what God has yet pledged to give them; that they might know their hope; that they might know the exceeding greatness of God's grace to them in Christ. Ephesians 1:15, "For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which you show toward all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places." Not one imperative in Ephesians 1. Then in chapter 2 verses 1-10, this marvelous Trinitarian salvation of chapter 1 has come to expression in individual lives. In chapter 2: 1-10, he gives more indicatives of how that salvation came to dead sinners who were the captives of the devil, who were in bondage to this world system—nothing but indicatives.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should boast."

Then you have your first imperative in Ephesians in verse 2: 11. "Wherefore remember", and it's just a call to remember what they were as Gentiles because in 2:13 all the way through to 3:13, he's going to give more indicatives of how God who has planned and executed this Trinitarian salvation; He's incorporating Jew and Gentile into this one new humanity in Christ. What Paul calls the mystery, that truth which was hidden for ages and generations, but is now made known, that in Christ God is constituting a new humanity where no walls of culture and tradition and religious institutions, even the ones instituted by God, they've been torn down, but no imperatives.

He keeps piling on the indicatives: This is what God has done. This is what you are. You've been raised from the dead. You've been incorporated into the new humanity. You have been made new men. You have put off the old man. You have put . . .

All of this is indicative after indicative after indicative, but then, he closes chapter 3 with another prayer that they might know the love of Christ that stands behind this magnificent salvation, individually and corporately. When we come to chapter 4 a torrent of imperatives sweeps over us, touching every facet of our lives—literally dozens of imperatives, sometimes packed together in short paragraphs. Eph 4:31 "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor be put away from you with all malice." Eph 4:27 "Don't give place to the devil." 4:32 "Be kind one toward another."

Imperative after imperative after imperative, but remember, Paul knew that those imperatives were based upon the marvelous indicatives, which form not only their foundation but their framework. He keeps reaching back to the indicatives, to inject motive and direction and perspective into the imperatives.

The content and the structure of the book of Ephesians demonstrates that the indicatives, which describe God's provisions for us in Christ, form the basis and the framework by which we accomplish the imperatives which direct us into a life well pleasing to Christ. The relationship between the indicatives and the imperatives in the economy of God's grace is again demonstrated.

c) A third passage as a sample, 1 Corinthians chapter 6.

After a sweeping overview of two books, the book of Romans and Ephesians, we want to zoom in on a specific individual passage to show this same assertion holds true. There at Corinth, there was rife immorality. Part of your temple worship as a pagan idolater at Corinth was to consort with a prostitute. In the intimacy of sexual union, you were worshipping and becoming incorporated into the life of the gods, and that whole pattern of life at Corinth, immorality was in the very texture of the souls of these Corinthians. Fornication was no more considered an evil than blowing a runny nose or scratching an itching ear. Adultery was frowned upon even in pagan societies, but not sexual uncleanness of a promiscuous sort. Paul had to deal with this problem. How does he deal with it? You say, ‘Well, he just ought to tell people if you fornicate and you don't repent, you'll go to hell.’ He did tell them that. 1 Cor 6:9, "Or don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of
themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” If you go on living in any one of these as a lifestyle, you'll go to hell. Plain and simple. If you're a drunkard, you better get delivered from your drunkenness, or you'll go to hell. If you're a fornicator, get delivered from your fornication, or you'll go to hell. Paul wrote, I Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you.” This was your lifestyle. These are the sins in which you were enmeshed, which held you in their iron-like grip. “but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” Paul is confident that many of the Corinthians have experienced a radical, fundamental cleavage with those kinds of lifestyles. However, those sins still clung to some of them like barnacles on the hull of a ship. They still clung to them like creeping ivy, and they had to be pulled off with Gospel dynamics and motives. It's not enough to tell a child of God who's turned his back on a lifestyle of fornication and uncleanness, ‘If you go back into that lifestyle, you'll go to hell.’ He needs more in order to conquer that sin. So what does Paul do? In 6: 12-20 he gives them two series of indicatives, followed by imperatives --Gospel indicatives and Gospel imperatives that they might live lives of sexual purity. Notice how he does it. Verse 12, “All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for the meats: but God shall bring to naught both it and them. (Now he's going to zero in on the problem of sexual uncleanness. Here's indicative number one. Look at the statement . . .) "But the body is not for fornication." (That is an indicative statement. It's not an imperative. He doesn't say don't fornicate. He said, ‘God didn't give you a body to go around and engage in whoredom and fornication with temple prostitutes.’) "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." (‘God gave us bodies in which we are to serve him.’) "The body ... is for the Lord." (... another indicative) "And the Lord for the body: 14 and God both raised the Lord, and will raise us up through His power.”

So here is indicative number one. What is it? The body is for the service of God and God is for the preservation and the ultimate glorification of the body. I need to know that. In a world full of sexual uncleanness, I need to look myself in the mirror and say, ‘That body is a body given for the service of God. It's going to go down to its grave, it's going to be raised in glory and in power.’ Now that has nothing to do with messing around with temple harlots. That has nothing to do with making out in the back seat of a car. That has nothing to do with saying, ‘Well, we're engaged, we can engage in heavy petting,’ etc. No, if I understand by these indicatives, what my body is, it's for the service of the Lord and God's commitment to my body ultimately to raise it from the dead. This is going to help me to scrape off the barnacles of a past life of uncleanness. But that's not all, he goes on with some more indicatives. Verse 15 is shocking. "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?" That's an indicative. Not an imperative.

It's saying this is what's true if you've been washed, if you have been sanctified, if you have been justified, if you're a real Christian, this is true of you. You are united to Christ, even in your bodily existence. Isn't that what the text says? "Don't you know your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? May it never be.” Christ is implicated in the sexual uncleanness of a true believer. What an indicative! The thought of it shocks Paul. Shall I take away the members of Christ, that is my body, and somehow, without it staining my sinless Savior personally, implicate my Savior in my momentary sensual pleasure. May it never be. So he sets before them these indicatives, and then he gives another one. 16 "Or do you not know (another indicative) he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for the two, said he, shall become one flesh. 17 But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” Here's the indicative. No such thing as casual sex. You think you go up to the temple and consort with the temple prostitute for fifteen minutes -- just a little bit of casual sex.’ No, in the mystery of the two-one flesh, there is a deep and a profound intimacy. That's an indicative. You don't make it that way. God did. He who made them in the beginning, male and female, and said that in the sanctity of marriage the two shall be one flesh, Paul says that the reality of sexual intimacy carries over even in a casual experience with a temple prostitute. Now with all those indicatives piling up in the thinking of a true Christian, notice what follows in verse 18, the first imperative: "Flee fornication." Run from it. Why? Because God's given me all these indicatives: My body's not for fornication, but for the service of God. God is committed to my body. He's going to raise it from the dead at the last day, resplendent, like the body of our glorious exalted Lord.

Furthermore, God is telling me my body is united to Christ. I implicate Christ when I join to a harlot. And there's no such thing as casual sex. To be a Christian is to be one spirit with Christ. Therefore, flee fornication, and it's as though Paul puts his pen down or stops dictating and says but some of those dear people at Corinth, they've been so enmeshed, so ensnared. Sexual impurity is so engrained. I need to beat it out with some more indicatives. Look what follows, more indicatives. 18 "Every sin that a man does is without the body" (an indicative), but he that commits fornication sins against his own body." What's the indicative there? The indicative is that in a peculiar way sexual uncleanness is self-destructive. I sin against my own body. You think it's fulfilling a bodily appetite. It's a form of bodily destruction,
is what Paul is saying. But now he gives another indicative. 19 "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, which you have from God?" What's the next indicative? If you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, this body with all of the reality of its physical subsistence, Deity inhabits it. The Holy Spirit actually dwells in it. Then a third indicative, 20 "For you are not your own; for you were bought with a price." My body, including my sexual organs, is stamped with the sign of the Cross, bought with a price. I'm not my own. Over every other erotically stimulated part of the body, the sign of the Cross has been stamped and etched by God Himself. With those three additional indicatives, notice how he closes. Here's our second imperative. 208 "Glorify God, therefore in your body." Do you see the pattern? Indicative, indicative, indicative, imperative. Indicative, indicative, indicative, imperative. What is God saying? God's saying, "Get your Gospel grammar straight." We must understand this pattern by which God intends to mold and shape the lives of his people.

So much for our 3 samplings from the Scriptures to show that the indicatives which describe God's provisions for us in Christ, form the basis and the framework out of which we accomplish the imperatives which direct us how we are to live for Christ or which direct us into a life well pleasing to Christ. This is a valid Biblical perspective.

(2) Secondly, Consider the practical implications of seeking to get our Gospel grammar right.

a) First, if we're really determined to get our Gospel grammar right, we must constantly pray for the Spirit's illumination of our minds as we read our Bible and hear teaching that opens these Scriptural themes, to the end that we may know more fully who we are and what we possess in Christ.

When we read our Bibles, when we hear Bible preaching, we need to plead with God as Paul did. He said, in Eph 1:15 "For this cause I also" Eph:16 "cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; 18 having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe," He's praying God would help them to understand the indicatives of grace. When we read our Bibles, we should not just be looking to fine-tune how we relate to our husbands, our wives, our children, to the unconverted. We need to dig back behind those practical issues, and say, 'Oh God, help me to know what an amazing person I am in Christ. Help me to understand what You've made me, what you've given to me, what are the endowments, of the profuseness of Your grace.' Isn't that the emphasis of Romans 6? Paul says, "Don't you know, don't you know?" In 1 Corinthians 6, 'Don't you know?'

If you knew these indicatives, they would percolate down, into your moral life and thinking—and then you'd be ready to obey the imperatives. So that's counsel number one, a practical implication of seeking to get our Gospel grammar right. Continually pray, that you may understand more and more who and what you are in Christ.

b) Secondl, we must discipline ourselves to believe all that God says is true of us regardless of how we 'feel'. We must discipline ourselves to believe all that God says is true of us. Everything God says we are and possess in Christ, we must discipline ourselves to embrace it by faith regardless of how we feel.

Our confidence is not in what we sense and feel, but in the equipping and enabling of God. We look and embrace by faith the Spiritual realities of our union with Christ, our indwelling by the Holy Spirit. We are dead to sin and alive to God. We live in a whole new realm of existence. We walk in newness of life. We have weapons and capacities to fulfill the law, resist the devil, put sin to death, and put on the Christian graces of Christ-likeness. For example, one of the major keys—not the major, but a major key—to day-by-day triumphs over remaining sin is believing and acting in terms of what God says we are in Romans 6. God says, in union with Christ we died to sin. It doesn't say sin died to us. Nowhere in the Bible does it say sin died to us. Sin is very much alive in the world and in us, but the Bible says, Rom 6:3 "Do you not know as many of us as have been baptized into Christ have been baptized into His death? "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life." Paul says in Colossians 3:3 "For we died, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Well, I don't feel very dead to sin. It has nothing to do with how you feel. Sin's tyranny, if you are a real Christian, was broken in the second Adam when Christ cried, "Tetelestai, it is finished", and when He rose from the dead, all of the claims of sin against His people were fully met. That's why Paul can say in Romans 6:14, "Sin shall not exercise lordship over you: for you are not under law, (That is Law demanding, commanding, and condemning) but you are under grace." Grace has released you from the power of sin through death, and so I must get up in the morning and look in the mirror and say believingly, in union with Christ I died to sin. When sin proposes itself from within or without, now you're equipped to do what Paul says in Romans 6:13. "Don't present your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but present yourselves unto God,
as those who are alive from the dead, and your members instruments of righteousness unto God." So when the temptation comes to take a second look at something my eyes shouldn't see, I say no. I died in Christ to the power of sin. I will not present my eyes instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. The indicatives of who I am give me the grace to do what I ought in the battle with sin. If you're getting your Gospel grammar right, discipline yourself to believe all God says you are and possess in Christ, regardless of what you feel.

c) The third word of counsel if we are to get our Gospel grammar straight is this: Acquire, a growing love for solid doctrinal preaching that increasingly displays the riches of your identity and possessions in Christ.

Acquire it. We've got to acquire it. By nature, we want everything simple. We want everything brought down to diddylisms. God isn't going bring His truth down to diddylisms. His truths are profound realities and, as a people of God, we need to acquire a growing love for solid doctrinal teaching that increasingly displays the riches of our identity and our possessions in Christ. That's how Paul sought to bring his converts to maturity. In Colossians 1:28 he said, "Whom we preach, warning every man, teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man mature in Christ." When you read Paul's Epistles, you know that's not stuff to be laid out in the fourth-grade Sunday school class. His concepts float in the stratosphere, but he wrote them for slaves and for masters and for housewives and for men that have to go out and hump it in the place of work. Let's get over our laziness. Peter said gird up the loins of your mind. Use your faculties in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Acquire a growing love for rich doctrinal preaching that increasingly displays the riches of your identity in Christ.

People don't want to read and work through Ephesians 1:2 and 1:3. After about 5 or 6 messages you start to hear, 'When are we going to have some practical preaching?' You get the practical stuff when Paul gets to it, and not until. 'Oh, I want five steps to have a better marriage.' The Spirit of God wants you to have a better grasp on what it is to be saved by the triune God, chosen in Christ, redeemed by Christ, sealed by the Spirit. When Paul wrote Ephesians 5 to husbands and wives, he could assume they had wrestled with Ephesians 1-3. They didn't sleep through Ephesians 1-3 while it was read. 'All the heavy doctrinal stuff – too academic, give me the 5 love languages.' 'Wake me up when we get to the practical.' No, the practical emerges out of the doctrinal. The ability to do emerges out of gospel dynamics and power which are believably embraced in dependence upon Christ. I urge you to the extent you have already acquired, increasingly acquire a love, a growing love for solid doctrinal preaching that opens up your treasures in Christ.

d) Then fourthly, acquire an increasing love for searching preaching which presses the divine imperatives upon you in such a way, as to drive you out of yourself and deeper into Christ and all that you have in Him.

Acquire an increasing love for searching sermons, that is, preaching that doesn't deal in generalities. Preaching that is too general takes the indicatives as a given, and then when it begins to press the imperatives, it doesn't create mature Christians. We need to have the generic brought down to the specific, and if we are straight in our Gospel grammar, we will acquire an increasing love for searching preaching which presses the divine imperatives upon us in such a way that we say, 'If that's what God's requiring, I can't do it without supernatural enabling.' Jesus said. Without Me, you can do nothing. God knows how to bring us into the 2 Corinthians 12 perspective. "Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me: for when I am weak, then am I strong." God's imperatives were meant to make us despair, and say with Paul, "Who's sufficient for these things?" When God says to husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, I say, God, if You said, Love your wives in a way that keeps her happy, keeps her content, I might be able to do that. I learned a few lessons over the years, but as Christ loved the Church? It drives you to your face, saying, "God, I can't do it. I'm too natively selfish, self-absorbed, self-seeking, self-protective. I can't love that way, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, and what's that love look like?" It suffers long — that means you're going to have a wife that makes you suffer in some area. How do you learn longsuffering if you don't have people around you to make you suffer and suffer long? It is kind - that means you're going to have a wife that makes you suffer in some area. How do you learn longsuffering if you don't have people around you to make you suffer and suffer long? It is kind — not easily provoked, seeks not its own, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly or treats someone in a wrong way, or is out of place. We need to love preaching that makes us despair of ourselves. Then we say, 'Oh God, show me everything I have in Christ because the Bible says . . .' 2 Peter 1:3, "Seeing that His Divine power has granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue." Paul said to the Colossians 2:10, "In Christ, you are made full." Where are you looking? To yourself? Or, as soon as a crisis comes up, off to the psychologist we go. God puts you in a dilemma and where do you look for help? Are the Scriptures sufficient, is Christ sufficient? In Christ I am endowed with all that I need to live the life to which God calls me by His imperatives.

May God spare us the curse of modern American evangelicalism that has learned how to live comfortable, easygoing, orthodox, lifestyles, that don't have the radical edge of utter resignation to Christ — a rejection of this
world as our friend. People want to drink at the world's fountains for their Christian liberty and for entertainment, but they don't like it when worldliness is identified specifically... and we have every grounds to identify it specifically. That's why the Scripture tells us, “Love not the world, neither the things of the world.” Learn to love searching for preaching that makes you say, ‘Oh God, I can't do that. I can't live that way. Show me who I am, what I have in Christ,’ and Christ will become more and more precious, as that kind of preaching drives you deeper to discover all that you are and all that you have in Him. So when people say, ‘Well, we want more preaching of Christ.’ I say, “What Christ? The Christ who only coddles us with Bible words? Or the Christ who's come to save us from our sins?” Then, I need to know the sins from which He needs to save me and from which I long as His child to be saved.

Finally, all these indicatives, only apply to Christians. Read Romans 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, and 1 Corinthians 1:1. When Paul addressed the people to whom that body of truth came, he addresses them this way: to the saints who are in Christ Jesus. They were at Corinth. They were at Ephesus, but they were in Christ, and that's why he could say, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ. That's the key phrase about what a real Christian is. It's not enough to be reared in a context of orthodoxy and truth and be able to say, ‘I subscribe to it,’ and even say it sincerely. A Christian has been wrenched out of Adam and into Christ by the Spirit of God. These indicatives are only for those who are in Christ. The Scripture says, ‘They that are in the flesh cannot please God,’ and you can't live a life well pleasing to God until you can say all those rich indicatives are mine because Christ is mine. What's the surest evidence that Christ is yours? Very simple, you're His, lock, stock, and barrel with no reservations. If you were to ask me, how can I really know that I'm in Christ? Christ is mine? I answer, ‘If you're His.’ That cuts through a mere subscription of what you believe. Are you His? You, Paul, could say of these Corinthians, ‘You were bought with a price. You're His possession, and you're glad that that's your identity.’

(i) Sins dominion being broken, does not mean sin does not remain. Sin remaining, does not mean sins dominion hasn't been broken.

Sins dominion being broken does not negate conflict. The conflict is the result of the indwelling of the Spirit and the law being written in the heart, the new good heart being given, the circumcision of the heart etc. Being dead to sin does not negate putting sin to death. We are dead to sin, but sin is not eradicated. It remains in the believer. We have died, there is newness of life, we no longer live in the same realm, but the new realm we live in is one in which we have indwelling sin that continues to rise up against us. Thus the incessant warfare. You kill it or it kills you. Deny self. Lose life. Pick up cross daily. Walk in newness of life by the Spirit and fulfill the law. Rm 6:2, 6, 7, 8-10, 14, 22. Rm7:17,20. 1 Pt2:24. Pg.119