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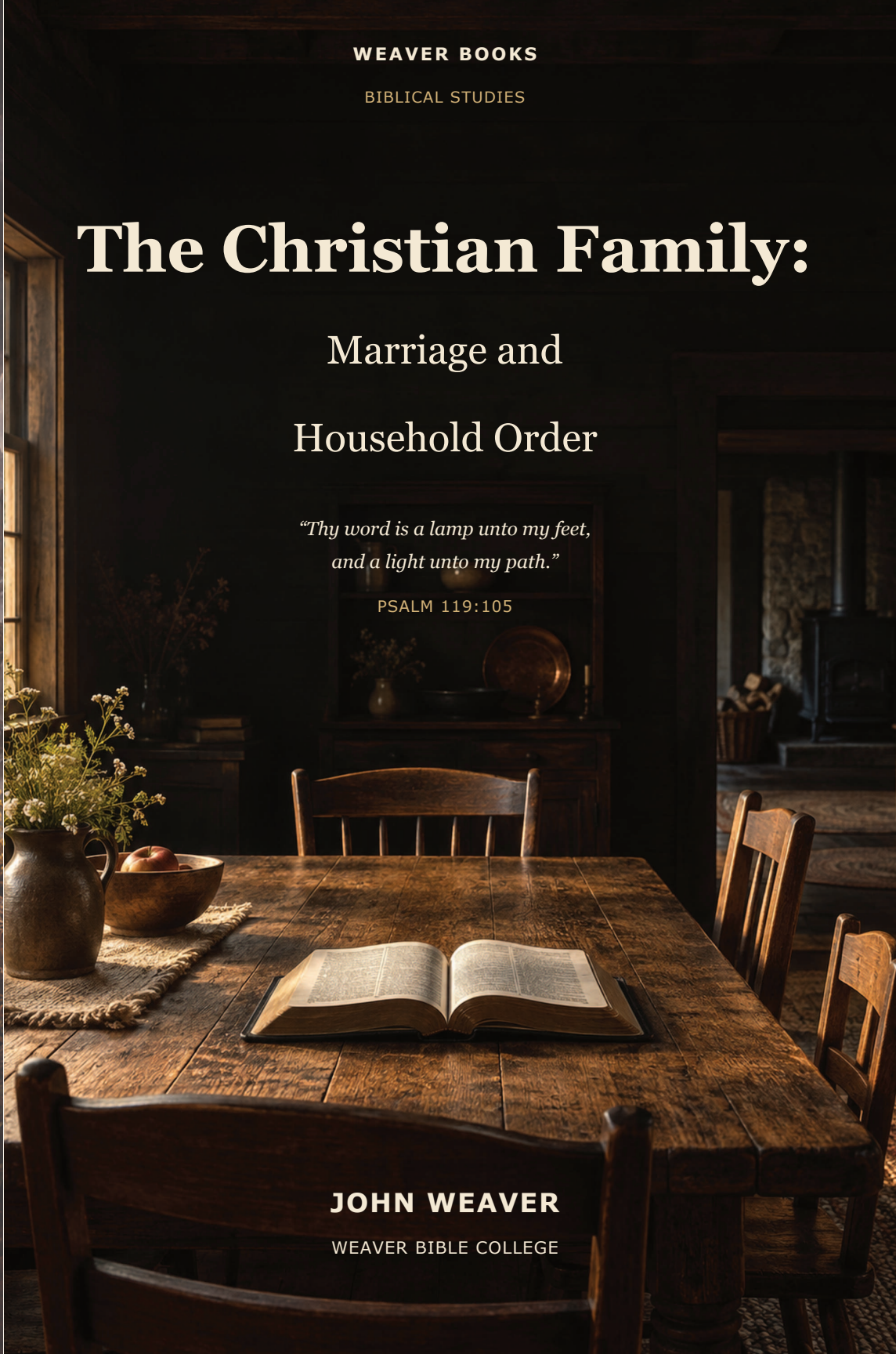
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The Christian Family:

Marriage and Household Order

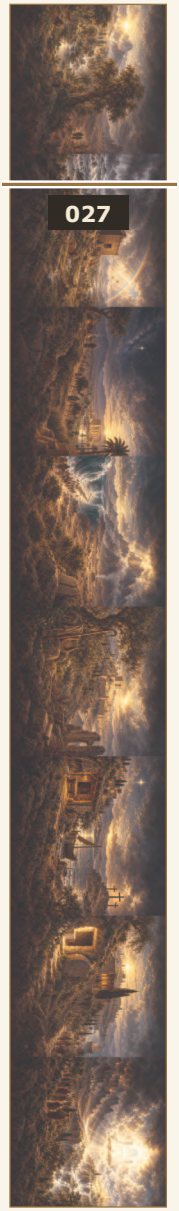
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



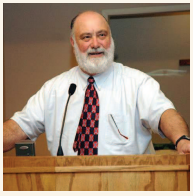
As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

JOSHUA 24:15, EXCERPT

The household is a place of provision, discipline, service, and daily witness. John Weaver considers marriage, parental responsibility, work, conduct, and the formation of a faithful home. This extended collection connects family relationships with the obligations of Christian life, asking how the authority of Scripture should shape both convictions and ordinary practice.

"If we want obedient children, loving, kind, and gracious children, we must be those kinds of parents to them."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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The Christian Family: Marriage and Household Order

Family Government

John Weaver

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The Christian Family: Marriage and Household Order

John Weaver

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Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

Corrected review edition - October 4, 2026. Repeated full sermons have been consolidated; chapter numbers, contents, indexes, and study-guide reading ranges follow this corrected edition. Original transcript variants remain preserved in the editorial archive. Final editorial and publisher approval is still required.

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CHAPTER 1

Application & Practicality of Biblical Law

August 18, 2000

Let me say that I appreciate the singing, and I thank Him for it each night. When the Lord was passing out musical talent, He totally overlooked me, I can assure you. I have a pastor friend who has a very beautiful voice and sings regularly. I was in his church preaching one time, standing right beside him while he was singing, and I thought, "Now is my opportunity." I was going to try to hit the notes exactly the way he hit them, and I thought I was doing pretty well.

After the song was over, he stepped up to the pulpit and said, "Folks, all my life I've prayed and asked the Lord to help me sing. From here on out, I'm not going to pray that prayer anymore. I'm going to ask God to help John Weaver to sing." So I need all the help I can get, I can assure you.

I also appreciate the graciousness and hospitality of the Wilsons this week, and, of course, Pastor Wardlaw and you folks for allowing me to preach here. I'm always delighted to share the

Word of God, and I trust that God will bless your heart and answer many questions as we look in the Bible.

Turn tonight to the book of Exodus, chapter 22. We'll read the first seventeen verses. When I get started tonight, we're not going to be using too much Scripture to begin with, and I think you'll see why in just a little bit. Then, all of a sudden, we're going to use an awful lot. I'll explain more in just a moment.

Exodus chapter 22, beginning with verse one: "If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep."

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 22:2-16 (KJV)

> If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution. By the way, it would pay you to underline this word each time we read it: For he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox or ass or sheep, he shall restore double. If a man shall cause a field or a vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field, of the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution. If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn of the field be consumed therewith, he that kindle the fire shall surely make restitution. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, let him pay double.
>
> If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he put his hand into his neighbor's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges, and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor. If a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep, and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no

> man seeing it, then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. And the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. But if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. If it be torn in pieces, then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn.
>
> If a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good, if it be a hired thing it came for its hire. And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

The Law as Restitution

"If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins."

Introduction: The Inescapably Religious Nature of Law

John Wycliffe had written in the flyleaf of his Bible this statement: "This Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Abraham Lincoln was a plagiarist; he simply dropped the "Bible." It was John Wycliffe who said that this Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

God is one, and His law is one. It is important to note in the Bible that law is revelation. In fact, the Hebrew word for law is Torah, which literally means authoritative revelation, authoritative instruction, or authoritative direction. The law is the revelation of God and His righteousness. As I have tried to point out for the last several nights, there is absolutely no ground in Scripture for despising the law of God. Neither can you relegate law to the Old Testament and grace to the New Testament, for there is grace in the Old Testament and there is law in the New Testament.

Whenever you begin to think about God's law, you have to consider that the only alternative to God's law is what you and I would call humanism, or modern-day relativism. Anytime anyone denies the law of God, it is for a reason: that they might establish their own law. It is absolutely impossible to live without law. What has happened today is that we have literally denied the law of God and established our law.

The theme for the book of Judges is found in Judges 17:6 and Judges 21:25: "There was no king in Israel in those days, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." We have denied God and denied God's law, and every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes, so to speak. When you deny God's law, when you say that God's law is no longer binding, you do so only to establish your law or someone else's law.

It is impossible for an individual to live without law. An individual has to have law. A family has to have law. A community has to have law. A church has to have law. A state or a nation has to have law. The question is not whether you will have law. The question is whose law you will have: God's or man's. You are going to have law.

You can determine who an individual's God is by determining which law system that individual follows. Have you ever stopped to think that law is inescapably religious? There is no such thing as an unreligious law. When Congress or the Supreme Court tells us that they are neutral and unbiased, that is a bald-faced lie. No one is neutral, and no one is unbiased.

I have a bias, and I confess and acknowledge it. My bias is toward the Word of God and toward the Lord Jesus Christ. But understand that there is no such thing as a neutral or unbiased law. Consider our federal Congress. Congress says it will not become involved in religion, but that is hogwash. When congressmen legislate and pass laws, they must determine whether a law is good or bad, right or wrong. It is their religion that determines good and evil, right and wrong, for them. Every law they pass has a religious basis and foundation. It may be Christian religion, or it may be pagan religion, but it is still religious. There is

no such thing as an irreligious or unreligious law. All law is inherently religious.

When anthropologists study dead cities and civilizations, one of the first things they want to know is the source of their law. If they determine the source of that law, they can determine who was the God of that society. If the source of man's law is man's reason, then man is his own God. If the source of our law is those nine black-robed Supreme Court justices, then the Supreme Court is our God. But if God Himself is the source of our law, then God is our God. Modern humanism always makes the state the God of society.

The State as God in Humanistic Thought

I am going to give you five quotes. I will tell you who said the first four. I want you to guess who said the fifth. The first quote is given by Hegel, the Marxist philosopher: "The state incarnates the divine idea upon earth." Hegel taught that the state was God walking on earth. Literally, government is God. That is what Hegel thought. He was a Marxist.

The second quote is from the German philosopher Johann Fichte, who also was basically a Marxist: "The state is the supreme power, ultimate, and beyond repeal, absolutely independent."

Did you hear what he said? “The state is the supreme power, ultimate, and beyond repeal.” What is he saying? He is saying the state is God. The third quote came from Benito Mussolini. Most of you recognize that name. He said, “Everything for the state, nothing outside the state, and nothing against the state.”

Have you ever wondered why these totalitarian regimes can line people up, hundreds at a time, set up machine guns, literally mow them down, and turn around and walk off? They can do that because they believe everything is for the state, nothing can be outside the state, and nothing can be against the state. If anything is against the government or the state, it has no right to exist. That is the result of their philosophy or theology.

It was Adolf Hitler who said, “The state dominates the nation because it alone represents the nation.”

Here is the fifth quote: “The state embraces everything. Nothing has value outside of the state. The state creates right.” Listen to that again: “The state embraces everything. Nothing has value outside of the state. The state creates right.” Would you like to guess who said that? Someone guessed Jesse Jackson. No, he was not a president yet. It was an American president.

That statement came from FDR, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He said, “The state embraces everything. Nothing has value outside of the state.” If you are not a good little statist, you have no value; you are worthless. Then he said, “The state creates right.”

Let me give you an illustration. This was told to me by a friend of mine who was president at the time. Senator John Tunney from California was a senator at that particular time when he was confronted by a pro-life group and asked, “Is not abortion murder?” You would think Senator Tunney would be pro-life because he was a nominal Roman Catholic. However, he responded that abortion was not murder. When they asked how that could be, he answered, “Because the Supreme Court has ruled that it’s not murder.”

They then asked Senator Tunney, “First of all, is it wrong to steal?” He said, “Well, of course it is.” They asked, “If the Supreme Court ruled tomorrow that theft was right, would it still be wrong to steal?” He said, “Of course it would not be.” What was he saying? The state creates right.

You can always tell who the God of a society is because whenever society gets in trouble, they immediately cry to their God. I was driving down the road with a pickup truck loaded with lumber, pulling a trailer that was loaded as well. I hit a little bump while going no more than fifteen miles an hour in second gear. The lumber shifted. I looked in my rearview mirror, and there came my trailer passing me.

And before I could do anything, the first thing I said was, “Help, Lord!” And guess what? The trailer pushed me carefully off the road into the ditch. It was large, not deep, and I stopped just about that far from a big pine tree. Just as I got out of the truck to look, a neighbor came in a four-wheel-drive pickup.

He said, “Oh, Brother Weaver, looks like you’re in a lot of trouble.” I said, “Yes, I am.” He said, “I can get you out.” He hooked me up to the chain and pulled the trailer out. Then he pulled the truck out. I hooked back up to the trailer, and he helped me rearrange the lumber. In fifteen or twenty minutes, I was gone.

You know what happened? When I saw that, I immediately cried to the Lord for help. You look around our country at the floods, droughts, tornadoes, and hurricanes, and tell me: Who is it our people cry to instantly and immediately? The federal government.

I want to give you four theories of law. The first three are unbiblical and humanistic to the core. That is why there will not be much Scripture used on these first three points. I could use Scripture against them, but certainly not to support them. Everyone here is capable of understanding that these three theories are absolutely, totally humanistic. Only the last one is biblical, and only the last one will I show and expound verse for verse, demonstrating the true biblical definition of law: law as restitution.

Here are the four concepts: first, law as reformation; secondly, law as regulation; thirdly, law as redistribution; and fourthly, law as restitution. Let us take them one at a time.

Four Theories of Law: Three Unbiblical and One Biblical

First, law as reformation. This is absolutely humanistic to the core. It is unbiblical and ungodly. Yet this is why we have so many rehabilitation centers, reformatories, prisons, and penitentiaries dotting the land.

Prisons are unbiblical. There was not a prison in God’s economy. There was a place where a man was held temporarily. When brought to trial, if he was found guilty of theft, he had to make restitution. If found guilty of some minor crime, he was beaten. If found guilty of a capital crime, he was taken out and executed. It was that simple. You did not need a prison. There were

prisons during Bible times, but those prisons and dungeons were operated by pagan people, not by God's people.

Law as Reformation: The Failure of Prisons

In fact, that is why Paul was thrown into a dungeon. It was a Roman dungeon, not an Israelite dungeon; Israel did not have prisons or dungeons per se. Here is the law as reformation: man thinks he will reform or rehabilitate individuals by his law. The slogan is, "Law is salvation." In other words, we will take this law and rehabilitate, reform, or save the individual.

Now, let me show you how arrogant that is. As holy, righteous, and godly as God's law is, it was never designed to save. God's law will direct us, quicken us, convict us, lead us, and do many things, but it does not reform or rehabilitate us as such.

You know what the Bible says in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 21? The Apostle Paul said, "Verily, if salvation had been by the law, then Christ died in vain." If there could have been a law passed that would save, why in the world did Jesus Christ come and die? Very clearly, law does not save. God's law does not save us, and man's law certainly cannot save. Have you ever stopped to think, where in the world did we get our prison systems? How is it that we have prisons?

There was a man most of you know, a Quaker who lived from 1644 to 1718: William Penn, the English Quaker and founder of Pennsylvania. The king owed his father boo coodles of money. After his father died, William Penn knew the king would never repay what he owed his family because Penn was a Quaker, and Quakers did not believe in bowing to the king. They would not take off their hats for him, and the king, who was against Quakerism, did not like that. Penn suggested that he would forgive the money owed him and his family if the king would give him some land in the New World. The king was more than happy to do so, because he would not only get rid of the debt but get rid of the Quakers as well.

And so he swapped his debt for the land. The word Pennsylvania simply means "Penn's woods." You may ask, "Brother Weaver,

what significance is that?" Quakers believed and taught that every man has a spark of divinity in him, a spark of good. They believed that when a man did wrong, if you could get him by himself and fan that little flame of divinity, or that little flame of goodness, soon it would burst into a roaring fire of goodness and Godhood, and man would automatically do what was right.

The only thing wrong with that was that it was absolutely, totally unscriptural and unbiblical. Our English word penitentiary comes from the Latin penitentia, which means to do penance. When a prisoner goes to prison or jail, the little room where he stays is called a cell. When you have a number of these little rooms joined one to another, you have a cell block.

Now, let us go back to the monasteries. The monks each had a little room, and his little room was called a cell. When several of those little rooms were joined to one another, they formed a cell block. What was the prisoner then supposed to do? He was supposed to be separated, to do penance, and to think about his evil deeds. Someone was supposed to be there to flame that little fire of goodness, and it would burst forth into goodness. This is totally unscriptural and totally ungodly.

That is basically how penitentiaries got started in this country: because of bad theology. You do not even have to talk to the wardens or the guards. I had a gentleman in my church for years who was on the probation and parole board, and he was once called upon to speak to the other probation and parole officers.

A man came to me and said, "Pastor, what can I do to teach them the biblical truth?" I said, "You can tell them, first of all, that prisons are unbiblical." I showed him a lot of things. He said, "Good, that's exactly what I'm going to do." And he did.

All you have to do is talk to the wardens, the guards, or the prisoners. They will tell you it doesn't work. You can take a petty thief who is ignorant, stupid, and does not know what he is doing—and there are a lot of them. One man went in to rob a bank and wrote the note on the back of his deposit slip. He left it in his own handwriting, with his address, phone number, and social

security number on the other side. That does not take too much brains to figure out who robbed the bank.

You can take somebody who does something dumb and stupid like that and sentence him to five years with a group of hardened, accomplished criminals. Guess what? He comes out a more educated and more accomplished thief than when he went in. He does not come back reformed or rehabilitated.

Alice and I were going to a meeting in Indiana, and we passed a busload of prisoners working on the side of the road. The bus said, "Indiana Department of Corrections." I said, "I wonder how many they're correcting." Just stop and think about that.

Here is law as reformation: You do wickedly, you get caught, and we put you in the prison system and rehabilitate you. Did you know that America now has more people in prison than many totalitarian countries? You need to study about UNICOR and find out who has investments in it. UNICOR is the prison system. Do you realize that judges and lawyers have stocks and interest in UNICOR? They put men in federal prison to work and pay them, the last time I checked with friends who were in, a grand total of eleven cents an hour.

Some of them are fine furniture makers and other things, and then they will take this furniture and sell it. They are not supposed to sell it in competition with other folks, but they do. One of the reasons we have such a high turnover is that we have to keep the system going so money can go into the right pockets.

But the truth is, law as reformation is humanistic and unbiblical. Very quickly, consider law as regulation. Here is the second idea. This is humanistic also. This is where the law tries to make it impossible for men to sin by controlling their activities. This is literally salvation by regulation. In other words, they are going to make sure that businessmen do not cheat, lie, and steal by regulating them to death.

Now, let me tell you what regulation does. This type of regulation makes crooks out of honest men. How? The honest man has to keep two sets of books: one that is true and accurate, and

one to show the government, just to keep them from stealing everything that he has made.

Law as Regulation: Salvation by Control

If government was not involved in it, on the other hand, you would have basically what is known as the law of supply and demand. You would also have what is known as character and integrity. Let me give you an illustration. Suppose Ron had a store, and I went into this store to do some business. He and I talked for a while, and we finally made a deal. I gave him some money, he gave me some goods, and I went down the road. Two or three hours later, I thought, “Hey, wait a minute. You know, he cheated me. No wonder he was ready to do this. He never told me something else.”

So I came back and said, “Now, Ron, listen, you never mentioned this. What you did was take advantage of me, and I want my money back. Here are your goods. Give my money back right now.” Suppose he answered, “You are crazy if you think I am giving you your money back. You made the deal. You live with it. Caveat emptor. Let the buyer beware.” I might not get my money back from him. But I am going to go over to Kevin and say, “Kevin, you had better stay away from Ron’s store. Let me tell you what he did to me.”

"Mark, don't go near that man. Let me tell you what he did to me. Jeff, let me tell you." By the time I get through, and everybody else he took has gotten through, guess what? He is going out of business. But what happens to the crooks? If they fill out all the necessary forms and follow the regulations to a certain degree, they can get all kinds of small-business loans and federal loans. They can be subsidized by the government and stay in business for years on taxpayers' money.

I was in Pennsylvania preaching, and there was an antique bookstore. I walked into the bookstore and asked the lady, "Do you happen to have the two-volume set of Alexander Hamilton Stevens, A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States?" She said, "Oh, you must be a rebel." I said, "Yes, ma'am, I am."

"And probably you are, too."

"Oh, no," she said. "I'm a Yankee. I'm a Federalist."

I said, "Well, let me just tell you a few things. First of all, let me tell you that the war was really the war of northern aggression because Lincoln started it. After he said he would not re-fortify Fort Sumter, he sent ships in contrary to his word. There is documentation that he and one man planned to start that war, and certainly Beauregard and those people had a right to fire on those ships because Lincoln was violating his word, and they were trespassing on

I said, "Furthermore, I want you to understand that the war had nothing to do with slavery. Slavery was not the issue. Lincoln said that if he could win the war without freeing any slave, he would do it. The issue was states' rights: Do we have the right to defend ourselves and direct our own government, or are we going to be regulated to death by a federal bureaucracy?"

I asked the lady, "Do you like the IRS?" She said no. "Do you like HEW?" No. "Do you like OSHA?" No. She said no to every one of them. I said, "You know, you're a pretty good rebel." She replied, "Well, I guess I am."

You see how absolutely stupid and asinine this is, and yet we never think about it. Let's pretend for a moment that this is the 1930s. I am walking down the street with a fifth of liquor in my back pocket, flipping a gold coin in the air, when a policeman sees me and arrests me. Please tell me why he is arresting me. Not the gold coin—not to begin with. It is Prohibition; I have the liquor.

Now it is the 1970s. I am walking down the street with the same fifth of liquor in my pocket, flipping the gold coin. Now it is the gold coin, because it is unlawful for us to have gold. You see what I am saying? When you begin to regulate things, you can make lawful things illegal and illegal things lawful.

Let me give you an illustration. Christian students in California were protesting a house of prostitution across from their campus. They walked up and down with billboards, protesting and making all the fuss they could. Suddenly the pimp arrived. The students watched him collect the money from the prostitutes. About that

time, a policeman came by, and the Christian young people flagged him down and said, "Look, we've been watching this house. This is a house of prostitution."

“We can testify to it. There’s the pimp. We just saw the girls pay him the money. We want you to arrest him.” The policeman said, “Watch me.” He went over, put his foot on the back bumper of the pimp’s car, and wrote him three tickets: one for illegal parking, one for this, and one for that. But he did not do anything about the house of prostitution. You know why? Because it was a licensed, regulated house of prostitution. You can have prostitution.

That is what Nevada is known for as well. But it is regulated and licensed. In other words, you can make sin legal by regulation, and you can make righteousness illegal by regulation.

We have a saying: “Ignorance is no excuse of the law.” Do you know where that came from? It came from when our country was first founded, because our law was based upon the Word of God. Did you know that juries determined guilt and innocence by use of their Bibles? Did you know that judges—and the reason we stand when the judge walks into the courtroom—initially walked in holding the Bible? Men stood, not out of respect for the judge, but out of respect for the Word of God. Now they take the Word of God out and want you to stand for them. But everybody knew the Bible. Ignorance was no excuse. Everybody had a copy of the Bible.

Every one of you violates multitudinous laws every day, and you do not even know it. How many of you have ever read the Federal Register all the way through? How many have ever read it all the way through every year? If you were to start reading today, it would take you about ten or fifteen years just to get through it one time. English isn’t Tuesday. There is no way that you can know what the law is. There are so multitudinous. But the idea that ignorance of the law is no excuse is based upon the Word of God.

Law as Redistribution: Legal Plunder

So here is law as reformation, as humanism. Here is law as regulation, as humanism. Thirdly, here is law as redistribution. That too is humanistic to the core. If you remember the Bolshevik

Revolution in 1917, the Bolsheviks took all the land and riches from the Tsar and distributed them to the peasants. Everybody was going to have some. How many peasants in Russia own land today? How many are wealthy? It was redistribution, all right, but it was taking from the Tsar and keeping it with a certain elite and a certain little group. That is basically what we have today in our land in the income tax.

It is nothing more than a redistributing of the wealth. Our government no more needs taxes to run itself than you need an extra set of eyes to see, if you can already see. You may ask, "Well, how in the world can you say that?" Let me tell you something. Did you realize that before 1913 there was no income tax? How did our government run itself before 1913? And may I remind you, before 1913 we did not have a several trillion dollar debt. You see, what we have today is a redistribution of wealth.

We have social manipulation and social control, taking from the haves and giving to the have-nots. We are taking from those who work and giving to those who will not work. I remember my daddy one time was talking to an old black man. The man told my daddy, "You know, Mr. D.J., I think what they ought to do"—and whoever the "they" is—"is take all the money in the world, put it in one pile, and divide it between everybody equally." Daddy said, "Do you realize that if they did that, before the week was over there would again be an inequality? Some men are smarter than others. Some men work harder than others. Some men are crooks and thieves. Before the week was over, there would be an inequality. It just wouldn't work."

The old black man looked at Dad and said, "I meant they ought to do it every Saturday night." That might work if they did it every Saturday night. But let me tell you what we have forgotten: when God says, "Thou shalt not steal," that applies to governments equally as it applies to individuals. When God says, "Thou shalt not steal," that is all-encompassing.

All you have to do is read Frederick Bastiat's book, The Law, and he will distinguish for you the difference between legal plunder and illegal plunder. If I pull out a pistol, stick it to your head, and say, "Give me your money," I can go to jail, I might get shot, or you

might whip me. I might get hurt. But if I really want what you have and do not want to suffer for it, all I have to do is get in a position where I can pass a law that will make you give to me. If you do not, you go to jail. That is still plunder, but it is legal plunder. Our Founding Fathers said in the Fairfax Resolves, "When we no longer have the right to give or withhold our money, we are under a complete tyranny."

Here is redistribution. A progressive graduated income tax is the second plank in the Communist Manifesto. Somebody says, "Ah, but Brother Weaver, don't you know the Bible says, in fact, our Lord Himself said it, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's'?" Isn't it amazing that so many people can quote that, but they can't quote the rest of the verse: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that belong unto God." The God who instituted government and set up government is the same God who tells you what belongs to government. If you let Caesar tell you, he'll take everything you've got.

What we've got today is redistribution: inheritance tax. Inheritance tax is totally, completely unbiblical. Do you realize that most people cannot afford to inherit their family farms or family properties because of inheritance taxes? I, with my own eyes, have seen grown men fall on the floor, weeping and crying like babies, because they had to sell the family farm just to pay the inheritance tax.

How many of you still live on the original family home place? One person in the entire congregation. You know what has happened in this country? We have become a generation of displaced Americans. Our forefathers, many of them, were born and died on a farm or homestead and never even left it. If you tried to mess with that farm or homestead, you got in trouble. Why? Because those men said, "This is what God gave me. This is what God gave our family. It's been in our family for years, for generations, and I'll die fighting before I see you take it."

What has happened in America is this: We've lost our home places. We've lost our farms. We've lost everything worth fighting for. We have nothing left. We have become a generation of displaced Americans in our own home, in our own homeland.

Another example is property tax. I suppose the most unbiblical tax of all is the property tax. Why? "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." Have you ever stopped to think that when a government begins to tax property, the government is usurping God's ownership over that property? The state of South Carolina doesn't own the property in the state of South Carolina. God owns it.

When the American Revolution was being fought, the colonists went to the Canadians and tried to get them to help fight England. One of their arguments was this: "If you don't help us stop this Parliament and stop this king, the next thing you know, they'll be trying to even tax our land."

In Atlanta, Georgia, there was a widow woman who had a piece of property with her home on it. Right beside her home, she had a second piece of property that was an acre. All she did on that property was keep her garden. It had been in her family for years. She had been paying property taxes on it for years, and it had a value of $50,000. Of course, she paid a lower percentage of that amount.

Then she received her property-tax notice, and that piece of property had an estimated tax value of $3.2 million. She asked, "How can this be? Last year, it was only $50,000." The answer was, "Some other property in the neighborhood sold for a good figure, a high figure, because a big corporation came in. So that's the value we had to put on all the surrounding property."

Let's translate that. The corporation would really like to buy her property, but she probably would not be able to sell it. So they were going to tax her until she could not pay, and she would have to sell it just for taxes. Or some of the good old boys would step in and buy it from her for a measly $50,000 or $60,000, then turn around and sell it for $3 million to the corporation. That's what it means.

I get so aggravated at some of those people. My aunt came up to me and said, "You need to help me." I asked, "What do you mean?" She was a widow woman, and they had raised her taxes like you would not believe. I said, "I'll go and talk with them." So I went

down to talk with them. Finally, the man told me, “We’re probably raising everybody’s taxes to the same amount, and what we want to be is fair. Now, you want us to be fair, don’t you?” I said, “No, sir, I don’t.” He asked, “What do you mean you don’t?” I said, “Let me ask you a question. Suppose a rapist came into a neighborhood and raped a woman. Then he began thinking, ‘I wasn’t fair to all those other women.’”

"I better go back and rape them." Or a thief comes in and robs one house and says, "You know, I wasn't fair to those other houses. I better go back and steal everything they've got too." No, sir, I don't want you to be fair. What I want is justice—what is biblical and right. Don't talk to me about fairness.

The point is that this is redistribution, and I am not going to take the time to preach it, but inflation is a tax that most of us never see. You may say, “Brother Weaver, bless God, I have $50,000 in a bank account.” Give it thirty days, and you will not have $50,000 worth of buying power, because inflation will eat it up. It is a redistribution of wealth. That is highly humanistic and unbiblical.

Law as Restitution: Biblical Principles from Exodus 22

Now watch: law as reformation, law as regulation, law as redistribution. I want to ask you to look in your Bibles at Exodus chapter 22, because I want to show you the biblical idea of law as restitution. Exodus 22:1–17 tells us a number of things about God’s law as restitution. First, verse 1 gives the ratio of restitution:

“If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.”

There is a fivefold restitution and a fourfold restitution. Why the discrepancy? The ratio is based upon the value and usefulness of the object, both at present and for the future. You can eat a sheep, make clothes from it, and perhaps use it as a pet. I do not know whether you drink sheep milk or not; I would include that with food. That is about all you can do with a sheep.

But you could take an ox and have milk and meat for food, use its hide for clothes and tents, and, more than that, an ox is a trained work animal. Therefore, God says the value of restitution, when something is stolen, depends upon its usefulness.

For instance, suppose Chuck is a plumber with a work truck full of plumbing tools and supplies. He drives that truck every day except Sunday, when he drives a family car. If one of those vehicles had to be stolen, which would he rather have stolen? His car. He does not need it as much; he needs the work truck with all his tools in it.

The work truck has a higher value and therefore a higher restitution than the family car. Here is fivefold restitution; here is fourfold restitution. It is based upon the usefulness, value, and use of the object.

We are talking about thievery. In verse one, he said, "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore it," that is, make restitution, fivefold for an ox and fourfold for a sheep.

In verses 2 and 3, the problem of defense is resolved when it comes to thievery: "If a thief be found breaking up and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution. If he have nothing, then he should be sold for his theft."

I will cover verse 3 later, but note verse 2. "If a thief be found breaking up," that is, breaking in, "and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him."

I was in Greenville a good while back when a man asked me, "Brother Weaver, what would you do if you woke up during the night and there was a man breaking in your bedroom window?"

I said, "That depends."

He asked, "What does it depend upon?"

I said, "It depends on whether or not I get my hands on the gun. If I get my hands on a gun, I'd shoot him. If I couldn't, I'd get my hands on a baseball bat and beat him in the head."

He said, "I don't think you ought to do that."

I asked, "What do you think I ought to do?"

He said, "I think you ought to go in the other room and pray about it."

I said, "You mean to tell me you think I ought to be in the other room praying while the man's in there raping my wife or murdering my children? I'd be praying all right. I'd pull that baseball bat back and say, 'Dear God, don't let me miss him this time!' Pow! I'd pray."

That is what the Scripture says. If a man is breaking in at night, you do not know who he is, whether he is armed, or what his intent is. God says, kill him and get it over with: there shall be no bloodshed for him.

But look at verse 3: "If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be bloodshed for him, for he should make full restitution." God says it is different during the daytime. In the daytime, you can see whether he is armed, recognize him, and perhaps catch him, if not immediately, then a short time later. In that case, God says, do not kill him; let him make restitution.

There is still a way that you could lawfully kill him in the daytime, and that is if he is armed and your life is in danger. As I told you last night, you still have the right of self-defense. You could lawfully shoot him even in the daytime. But if he is breaking in at night, you cannot see him, do not know his intent, and do not know whether he is armed; just shoot him and get it over with. There is to be no bloodshed on that count. If it is daytime, do not kill him unless he is trying to hurt you. You can see him, and God says to give him the opportunity to make restitution.

Now look at verse 4. There is specific restitution when a thief is caught in the act, or before he has time to dispose of or abuse the goods: "If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox or ass or sheep, he shall restore double." Here we have double restitution—not fivefold or fourfold, but double.

Suppose Sean stole Chuck's work truck and was caught two blocks from the house, before he got any farther. If the truck and

equipment are worth $20,000, God says he should pay Chuck double, or $40,000. Why? Because Chuck has not really been hurt or suffered anything; he has only been inconvenienced for a short time. Here is fivefold, here is fourfold, and here is double.

Certain acts, whether deliberate or accidental, incur a liability that requires restitution. Verse 5 says, “If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field of the best of his own field, of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution? If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn of the field be consumed therewith, he that kindle the fire will surely make restitution.”

If my horse gets out of my pasture, enters my neighbor's cornfield, and eats twenty bushels of corn before I can catch him, I am responsible to replace or restore those twenty bushels. I must make restitution from the best of what I have. You may say, “But Brother Weaver, you didn't intend for your horse to get out.” That's immaterial. It was my horse; I am responsible.

If I come to your house and your dog runs out and bites my leg, it is your dog, and you are responsible. You cannot help that. If you do not want the responsibility, do not have the dog. It is just that simple. At our house, we have an attack pig—we do not have something like that. I have often said I pitied the poor thief who came to my house. He would probably trip over one of the animals, break his neck, and sue me for everything. But that is the way it goes. We are responsible.

Here is the application of verse 6. You rake your yard, gather the leaves, and set them on fire. Then the wind carries the burning leaves into your neighbor's yard, sets it on fire, and the flames spread to his house. By the time the fire department arrives, his house has burned down. Guess who is responsible to build him a house? You are.

You say, “But Brother Weaver, it was an accident.” It does not matter. You know what God is teaching us? God is teaching us responsibility. If you are going to play with fire, you ought to be responsible and have enough people and equipment out there to

keep it under control. You do not let things like that happen. You have to learn responsibility.

Let me tell you, if I step out of this church building or your house door and there is a rotten step, and I fall through and break my leg, you are responsible for my medical bill. You say, "But Brother Weaver, the board was rotten." Well, you had a responsibility to fix the rotten board. You see, God keeps us responsible.

What we want to do is like Israel: "We want a king to rule over us, that we may be like everybody else, and that the king will fight our wars for us." We do not want responsibility. We simply do not want responsibility.

When I was a boy, I had some cherry bombs and was out in the yard bursting them. My mother came out and said, "Son, your grandmother has a headache." She said, "If you are going to burst those things, go down to the woods." My dad had plenty of property, but I crossed the field, climbed over my neighbor's fence, went across his field, and went down into a stand of pine trees. Maybe I went there because it was cool. Those little pine trees were about that big around, and the straw was real thick under there. It was shady and cool. I stood there and burst those cherry bombs until I got to the last one. I lit it, threw it over my shoulder, and started walking home.

I got about fifty yards and smelled smoke. I turned around and looked, and that last cherry bomb had set the pine straw on fire. There was already a place as big around as that organ, that piano together. My heart went in my throat. I broke off some pine limbs and fought that fire. It took me thirty to forty-five minutes to put it out. I finally got it out and said, "God, my helper, I am not going to play with cherry bombs again. I am not going to get on my neighbor's property." Of course, I did not know any better then. But if I had burned down that man's pine stand, my father would have been responsible.

God says there are certain acts that require restitution, whether they are accidental or not. That is immaterial. In verses 7–13, responsibility is determined for goods held in custody. After you

read and understand this, you may not want to be responsible for holding your neighbor's goods in custody any longer.

"If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep, and if it be stolen out of the man's house, if the thief be found, let him pay double. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges to see whether he hath put his hand into his neighbor's goods."

"For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox or ass, for sheep, for raiment, for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges. And whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor."

So here I go up to Brother Greg: "Now, Brother Greg, listen. Here's this knife. This knife is a genuine Buck knife. This knife belonged to my great-grandfather. That's great sentimental value. Let's say this knife is worth five thousand bucks. Now, Brother Greg, would you keep this for me?"

He said, "Well, sure, I'll be glad to." The word keep literally means to guard and protect. So he agrees to keep it for me. While he is keeping it, someone breaks in and steals it.

If the thief is found, the thief is only to pay double. Why? Because I was not using it anyhow. Once again, I have merely been inconvenienced. But let us suppose the thief gets in and steals it, and neither the thief nor the knife is found. Then I say, "Now wait a minute, Greg. You told me you were going to keep my knife."

"Well, Brother Weaver, I had it laying up there on that mantel, and I thought that would be a safe place."

"Greg, don't you know folks can break in, see it there, and take it?"

God says there is a controversy. If I think Greg has been negligent, he is to stand before the judges. If the judges find that he has been negligent, let him pay me double. Greg would then owe me $10,000. Why? Because when he agreed to keep my knife, he was saying, "I'm going to guard it. I'm going to protect it." When people deliver things to you to keep for them, God says you are

responsible. You had better make sure that it does not get stolen and that you are not negligent.

If you are not negligent, He says in verse 10, “If a man delivered to his neighbor an ass or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep it, and it die or be hurt or driven away, no man seeing it, then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both, that he had not put his hand into his neighbor's goods, and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good.”

If he was not negligent, that is one thing. But if he was negligent, he owes me double. He says, “...and if it be stolen from him,” even while he is keeping it, “...he shall make restitution to the owner thereof.” In other words, he would at least owe me one back. There is restitution demanded for goods held in custody that you allow to get lost, stolen, or abused through your negligence.

Look down at verses 14 and 15. Verse 13 says, “If it be torn in pieces,” then, if a wildcat gets the animal, “then let him bring it for a witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn.” In other words, the wildcat got it; he had no control over that.

Now watch verse 14: “If a man borrow aught of his neighbor, and it be hurt or die, the owner thereof being not with it, he shall surely make it good. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good, if it be a hired thing it came for its hire.”

God is telling us that special principles apply to rental and loan arrangements. When we read, “if it be hurt or die,” we may think only of animals, and not everybody has animals, especially those who live in town. So let us work it out in a way that can be understood in town.

Suppose I go to Brother Tony and say, “My lawnmower is torn up, and my grass needs cutting. May I borrow your lawnmower?” He permits me to borrow it. I take it home, begin cutting my grass, and, five minutes later, the motor blows up. What happens? If I am the average American Christian, I sneak back to his house, push it under his garage, and hope he does not remember that I was the last person who borrowed it. But God says that if I borrowed it, it is my responsibility. I must fix it, put in a new motor, and return it working just as it was when I received it.

However, I could ask Brother Tony to loan me the lawnmower, and he could say, "You may borrow it, but I will come over and watch you, and perhaps even help you cut your grass." If he is with me while I am using it and the motor suddenly blows up, he must pay for it, because he was present and saw that there was no negligence on my part. It was simply time for the motor to go, and it went. But if I borrow it while he is absent, it is my responsibility to fix it.

Now, there is another way out of it. I could say, "Brother Tony, I need a lawnmower." He might reply, "Fine, Brother Weaver. You may use mine." But I could say, "Brother Tony, I'll give you twenty bucks. I want to rent it from you." He agrees, I give him the money, and the motor blows up. According to the Bible, it is his responsibility because he rented it to me. It came for its hire. But if I borrow it, it is my responsibility.

You know what I learned a long time ago, and learned the hard way? It is easier to own something yourself than to borrow it. It seemed like everything I borrowed tore up. I was building a house where we lived for fifteen years, and the men in my church said, "Brother Weaver, I'll loan you my skill saw. You won't have to buy one." David brought me a brand-new skill saw, and I took it out of the box myself. I used it for a week, and someone came on the job site and stole it. I went downtown and bought two just like it. I took one to David and said, "Thank you for letting me use your skill saw. Although yours got stolen, here is a brand-new one to replace it. I won't need to borrow this one because I have one for myself, and I can assure you mine will be locked up when I leave."

Do you understand responsibility? God's law teaches us responsibility. I borrowed my father's chainsaw while mine was in the shop. Daddy had a brand-new, five-hundred-dollar Stihl chainsaw. I had a special gas can marked "Chainsaw gas," with oil already mixed in it. I poured gas into the saw, cut wood for perhaps thirty seconds, and the motor locked up. The chainsaw man said someone had put gas in it without oil. I said it could not have been me, because that was the only thing I used. Then I checked my can and discovered that one of my children had

poured out the mixture, put regular gas in it, and used it for the lawnmower.

It cost me $150 to get my daddy's chainsaw fixed. I had to pay it. To this day, even with my chainsaw, before I put gas in it, I pour it in my hand, look at it, and make sure the oil is in it. Listen, you start obeying God's law and paying for some of your mistakes, and it does not take long to learn. Take God's law seriously, folks, concerning restitution, and you will learn to be responsible.

Now, look quickly at verses 16 and 17. This would take care of the fornication that we have running rampant. He said, "...if a man entices a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife." So God says that when a man seduces a woman, he must marry her. Here is the only way he can get out of marrying her biblically: "If her father utterly refused to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins."

God says, here is a young man who seduces a young woman: You must marry her. Then, if you read the last three verses of Deuteronomy 22, God says that you can never put her away. You can never divorce or separate from her. You are the one who humbled her. God says, she is yours from then on. The only way the man can get out of marrying her is if her father utterly refuses to give her to him. If the father refuses, the young man has to pay dowry according to the dowry of virgins.

Dowry in the Bible was three years' wages. So, let us say the average man in this community makes $50,000 a year. That means the young man who seduces your daughter owes your daughter $150,000 if you are not going to let her marry him. You say, "Why would God say that?" Because God is looking out for the woman. Every man wants to marry a pure woman. But when a man finds that the woman he loves may not be pure, yet can enter the marriage with $150,000, he tends to be a little more forgiving and understanding.

That's the truth. God's looking out for the woman. Let me tell you something: if every young man who sleeps with a young girl were required to marry her or pay three years' worth of dowry, I

guarantee you, the fornication rate would drop dramatically. You understand that what God is telling us is this: seduction is a breach of the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” as well as a breach of the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Since this young man has stolen her virginity, he must pay. He must make restitution.

Now, I want you to understand something about restitution. I have covered tonight, very quickly, a fivefold restitution, a fourfold restitution, and a twofold restitution. There is one other restitution that I have not covered, and I am not going to ask you to read it. Just jot it down; you can read it when you get home. That is a one-fifth, or twenty-percent, restitution. There is one avenue that I have not covered, but God's Word covers it in Leviticus 6, verses 1–7.

Let's suppose that Brother Roger comes up to me and, while we are talking, sticks his hand in my pocket and steals a hundred-dollar bill. I do not have a hundred-dollar bill in my pocket, but let's suppose I did, and he stole it. He gets away with it. In fact, he was so good that it was perhaps two or three days before I even realized the money was gone. After I realized it was gone, I had no idea it was him. He got slap away with it. No one suspected him.

But a week or two later, God convicted him. He says, “I want not to have done that. That was wicked. That was wrong. That was ungodly.” Guess what? Roger is supposed to come back to me and say, “Brother Weaver, I need to ask your forgiveness. I stole from you. I took that hundred-dollar bill. Here is that hundred-dollar bill back, plus twenty-percent restitution. I want to be right with you and right with God.” The twenty percent applied when the man got away; nobody saw him, but God convicted him. And by the way, if I am dead and gone, he is to give it to my family. If I have no family, guess what? He is to give it to the church.

Read Leviticus 6 when you get home tonight. I want you to understand that God requires restitution. Do you remember 2 Samuel chapter 12? David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. Nathan the prophet came along and said, “Let me tell you a story, King. There’s a rich man who had all these sheep.

There was a poor man who had one little ewe lamb, and he nursed it in his bosom just like a child. A stranger came to that rich man, and the rich man spared to take of his own flock. He went over and stole that poor little lamb from that poor man, killed it, and fed his guest."

David became so angry. He said, "The man that had done that shall surely die, and he shall make a fourfold restitution." He knew God demanded restitution.

Have you ever wondered why, when the children of Israel departed from Egypt, they asked—not borrowed—the Egyptians for gold and silver? The word is literally asked. They did not borrow it with the intent of returning it; they borrowed it by saying, "Give it to me permanently." Why did God move those Egyptians to give it? God was making those Egyptians pay restitution for the years that they held His people in captivity and bondage.

Abimelech in Genesis chapter 20 had taken Sarah. God had fast closed up the womb of every woman in his house. God told Abimelech, "Unless you restore the man his wife, you're a dead man. I'm going to kill you. Restore his wife and make restitution." Abimelech gave Abraham back Sarah, along with sheep and oxen. He said, "Here, just leave me. Don't stay around me. Go wherever you want to go in my land, but don't stay around me." Thus he was made to give restitution.

Have you ever asked yourself why the children of Judah went into captivity in Babylon for seventy years? You say, "Well, Brother Weaver, the answer is obvious: because of their sins." Ah, but what specific sins? If you read 2 Chronicles 36:21, you will find that the sin they committed most was failing to let the land keep its Sabbaths. They failed to let the land rest. God said that, as long as they were in captivity, the land kept its Sabbaths. God demanded that His people make restitution for abusing His land. Folks, God requires restitution.

There is no other just and equitable way to deal with sinners. Suppose some little kid throws a baseball through your window, and his father says, "Now, Johnny, apologize to the good man."

"I'm sorry I broke your window." "There, Johnny, now don't you feel better? Now let's go home." Oh no, you do not. You will take the apology plus a new window. He must make restitution; he must do that which is right and equitable.

Now let me show you the difference between God's law and humanism, between God's law and man's law, so you can judge where we are in this country. Suppose you worked hard, saved your money, and bought a brand-new car for $30,000. You are excited and want to show it to everyone. You drive to church one night, run inside, and forget to remove the keys. You will be gone only a few minutes. When you come back, the new car is gone. You run to the office and call the sheriff's department: "There is a brand-new LTD going down the road. It is blue, the license number is such and such, and it has just been stolen. We saw it heading east on such and such a road."

And so the sheriff puts out an APB, and a deputy calls back: "Well, I've got that car right in front of me. I'm going to pull him over." The deputy turns on his light, turns on his siren, but the individual driving that car, instead of pulling over, just foreboards it and tries to escape. The deputy calls back: "He's trying to get away. I'm going to give chase." The new car goes around curve after curve until the man leaves the road, wraps it around a pine tree, and absolutely totals it. When the sheriff's deputy arrives, the old drunk is behind the wheel, and he's not hurt.

Most of them never are. The deputy says, "You got me!" and the old drunk says, "So what?" He is arrested and thrown in jail.

Here's man's law. You get ripped off once when your car is stolen. You get ripped off a second time because, if you have insurance and it replaces the car, you must wait a while, and your insurance rates go up; insurance companies are not going to lose. You get ripped off a third time when the old drunk is thrown in county jail, because your tax dollars feed and clothe him. A fourth time comes when he cannot afford a lawyer and receives a court-appointed attorney at your expense. A fifth time comes when he is found guilty and sentenced to five to six years in prison, while you feed and clothe him. You are ripped off again because, while he

is imprisoned, somebody must care for his wife and children. And guess what? Your tax monies do it again.

Now, let us take it under God's law. The old drunk steals your car, wrecks it, and totals it. He is brought before the judge, and the theft is proved. Let us say it was merely a leisure car, not a work vehicle. The judge looks at him and says, "All right, I fine you $120,000—fourfold restitution, to be given not to the state, but to the man you stole from." You ask, "Brother Weaver, what is that old drunk going to do?" He stands there saying, "$120,000? Judge, you must be crazy." The judge replies, "No, I am not crazy, sir." The man says, "I do not have $120,000." The judge answers, "That is very simple. We believe in biblical law. Exodus 22:3 says, 'If a man have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.' That means, sir, you now become the personal servant and slave of this man until you work out $120,000." You say, "Amen, Brother Weaver." But what is to stop him from running off and never finishing the payment?

Turn to Deuteronomy 17. Beginning with verse 8, God says, "If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gate, then shalt thou rise and get thee up into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. And thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire, and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment. And thou shalt do according to the sentence of that place which the Lord shall choose. Show thee, and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee, according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgments which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do, thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall show thee to the right hand or to the left."

“And the man that will do presumptuously and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth at the minister, therefore, before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die. And thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.”

If I know that, when I am caught stealing, I have to make fourfold restitution, I am not going to steal. If I know that, if

caught, I cannot make fourfold restitution, I will be sold as a servant or a slave, that will make me think twice. If I refuse to work it out as the judge tells me, I will be put to death. Wouldn't that tend to cut down on theft? It would tend to stop it.

We have an expression in our land: “Crime doesn't pay.” That depends on whose law you are under. If you are under man's law, it does pay. That is why we have so many criminals. If you are under God's law, it does not pay, because it is the criminal who suffers and not the victim.

If a man steals $20,000 from Brother Roger, that man will be thrown into prison, and Brother Roger will have to support him during that time. Any restitution is usually made to the court or to the state, and not to Brother Roger. Crime does not pay only when you follow God's law.

In Georgia, we have at least taken a step in the right direction with what are known as restitution centers. If a man commits a nonviolent crime, without a weapon—if he simply breaks into a house and steals—many judges in Georgia now sentence such men to restitution centers. They take old motels and refurbish them. The men must stay there, go out every day and work, and return to spend the night until they have paid back their victim and all court costs.

That is not fourfold or fivefold yet, but at least it is a step in the right direction. Turn in your Bibles to Romans, chapter three, because I want to head off an objection. Inevitably, somebody will say, “Oh, brother, that's Old Testament.” Yes, it is, but the Old Testament is just as much the Word of God as the New Testament. We do not have two Bibles; we have one Bible. Somebody may say, “Brother Weaver, I don't know whether I like this idea of restitution or not.”

The Necessity of Restitution in Salvation

"I mean, it might cost me." It might. But you say, "I don't know if I like restitution or not." Well, let me tell you very plainly: if you don't like restitution, you don't like God's salvation, because there is no salvation without restitution. Do you realize that we sinned

against God? We offended God's righteousness, holiness, justice, and law. Do you know what Jesus Christ did? Jesus Christ was made of a woman and made under the law to redeem them under the law. He came and worked out a perfect righteousness in obedience to the law.

Look what the Bible says in Romans 3, verse 23. Everybody can quote it: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Verse 24 says, "...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and verse 25 says, "...whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." You say, "Brother Weaver, what does that mean?" The word propitiation is the Greek word hilasmos.

It literally means to placate, appease, or satisfy. Do you know what the death of Jesus Christ did? It placated, appeased, and satisfied the wrath of God. How? Because Jesus Christ made restitution in our stead. He did what we could not do. The man who hates restitution hates salvation, because there is no salvation without restitution.

Now, let me tell you very quickly, folks: God demands restitution. He not only demands restitution for Himself, but from man to man. One of the greatest evidences that we have been genuinely converted by the grace of God is that we are willing to make restitution. In Luke chapter 19, there was a man by the name of Zacchaeus, the wee little man. He climbed up in that sycamore tree. He was a tax collector, and he was a thief. When Jesus came along, He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house." I've often wondered if he got a splinter in his pants sliding down that tree. I bet he slid down that thing so fast. By the time his feet hit the ground, here's what he said: "Lord, behold, the half my goods I give to the poor, and those that I've taken wrongly from I restore fourfold. I'm willing to make restitution. I'm willing to do what's right."

You can talk about loving the Lord and being a Christian, but until you are willing to obey and do what's right, your talk is meaningless. There are plenty of teenagers that owe their parents restitution. You may have stolen from your parents, dishonored

your parents, or done things that were wicked and wrong. You need to restore things.

There are husbands and wives who are at each other's throats, husbands and wives who have differences. If you are a child of God, you need to make restitution when and wherever necessary. I do not care whether it is your wife or your husband; you need to do what is right.

Biblical law teaches us that, far from enriching man, sin will destroy man. God's Word makes us responsible. You need to forget this philosophy of the world that says, "Well, just forgive and forget." Most people do not know what forgiveness is. What they mean is, "I am just going to forgive you and forget about it." We do not forgive and forget, folks. We forgive, we forget, and we make restitution. That way it can really be forgotten.

I walked up to see one of the men in our church. His secretary happened to be a pastor friend's wife. While I was waiting for him to finish a phone call, I saw a beautiful jar of candy on Roxy's desk. I said, "Oh, Roxy, may I have a piece of candy?" She said, "Yes." I picked up the glass jar, and it slipped out of my hands, hit the floor, and sent candy and glass everywhere. I turned red.

I immediately apologized. "Roxy, I'm sorry. Let me get the broom and clean it up." She said, "No, no, Brother Weaver. I'll clean it up." I said, "No, ma'am, you will not. I dropped it, I broke it, and I will clean it up." So I cleaned it up. Then I asked, "Where did you get this jar of candy?" She said, "At the drugstore. Why?" I replied, "Because I'm going to replace it. I'm going to make restitution." She said, "Well, you don't have to do that."

I said, "Yes, I do." I went to the drugstore, but I couldn't find a jar of candy like hers. So I bought her a larger one with more candy. I brought it back and set it on her desk. She said, "Bro. Weaver, you didn't have to." I said, "Yes, I did. I had to. That one penny piece of candy cost me about ten bucks. And I can assure you, Roxy, the next time I pick up a glass candy dish, I will hold it."

Because I've learned my lesson. God wants us to be responsible. God's law teaches us that we must be responsible. We must learn to restore and make restitution and be Christian and not humanist.

If you want to establish God's law, you do so by obedience. If you want to establish man's law, you disobey God and obey man.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask that You would teach us tonight and show us how desperately we need the truth of Thy Word—how practical, how applicable. How many social, civil, state, and national problems would be resolved if we would simply go back to Your law, to Your Word. Give us wisdom and give us repentance. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Biblical Military Regulations

November 6, 2002

Introduction and Reading of Deuteronomy 20

Open your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 20. This week I have been dealing with the biblical doctrine of war. The first night I dealt with the fact that God is a warrior; last night, I dealt with the concept of a holy war and the concept of a just war. Tonight I want to deal with some military regulations in the Bible—some that may surprise you. Deuteronomy 20, beginning with verse 1.

God says, "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them. For the Lord thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. It shall be when you come nigh unto the battle, that the priests shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies.

"Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble. Neither be ye terrified because of them. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint, as well as his heart."

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 20:1-20 (KJV)

> And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people. When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee an answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, thou shalt take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.
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> But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. But thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, so shall you sin against the Lord your God. When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt

> not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them, for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down, for the tree of the field is man's life to employ them in the siege. Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down, and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.

Military Regulations in the Bible

Having read Deuteronomy chapter 20, I want to say that I am going to be going a little fast tonight. I try not to go too fast, but I have about three different messages that I am trying to combine in one. I will be quoting a lot of Scripture and merely citing references, so jot those references down and check them in the Word of God afterward. As Paul told those Bereans, they were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they searched the Word of God daily to determine whether those things were so. Even when the Apostle Paul preached, he commended the Bereans for searching the Word of God for themselves.

We have dealt with God as a warrior, and with a just war and a holy war. Tonight we come to military regulations in the Bible. Deuteronomy chapter 20 is an entire chapter given to military regulations. Incidentally, Israel had a militia. She did not have a standing army until later, under King David, but it was indeed a militia, and God gives rules and regulations for ordering it.

All the wars of Israel against their enemies were to be carried out in faith, without fear, and in total reliance upon the might and power of God Himself. God requires that we be a people of faith, that we live in faith and not in fear. In fact, every area and every sphere of our life is to be brought into conformity to the Word of God.

Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verses 1 through 8, says, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.” In the last verse, verse 8, it says, “A time to love, and a time to hate, a time of war, and a time of peace.” God is saying that there are times when there will indeed be peace, but there are also times when there will be war. Times and circumstances do not change or

alter the principle of faith. We are to exercise faith in times of war and trouble, as well as in times of peace and prosperity.

Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 1, says, “When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

War as an Assumed Fact of Scripture

War and Fighting Are Assumed Facts in Scripture

Fighting and war are assumed facts in Scripture. Note what God says: “When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies,” not if, but when. In other words, God says there is indeed going to be a time of war. There is going to be a time to fight. Whenever you go, there are certain principles that should regulate that.

Look in Deuteronomy 21:10. Once again, God says, “When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive.” Note again the words, “when thou goest forth to war.” Then, in Deuteronomy 23:9, God says, “When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.” Here is a basic assumption in the Bible: there are indeed going to be times of war and times of fighting.

It is simply fantasy and wishful thinking to indulge in an ideology that envisions world peace and perfect harmony in this world as a whole, when, by and large, this world rejects and despises the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot have world peace apart from the Prince of Peace. Yet there are so many different philosophies abounding in this world today—communism, humanism, socialism, and utopianism—and everyone tries to think that his little ism is going to bring in the perfect society and a world of peace.

Years ago, I learned about the word utopia. Everyone wishes for a utopian society, a perfect world and a world of peace. I had been blessed, in one sense of the word, to have three years of Greek. Reading in the Greek New Testament, I came across the word for

utopia. I became so excited that I could hardly contain myself. The word utopia is made up of two Greek words: u, which is a negative meaning no, and topos, meaning place. Literally, the word utopia means “no place.” It does not exist; it is a figment of someone's imagination. Thus, a communistic utopia, a socialistic utopia, or a humanistic utopia is a figment of their imagination. It does not really exist.

Socialism, communism, utopianism, and United Nationism, if you want to put it like that, are nothing more than deceitful failures from their inception. They cannot be real. They are not reality, because they are apart from God and apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. You are never ever going to have a world of peace in a Bible-hating, God-hating, Christ-denying society. That is all there is to it. In Isaiah 57, verses 20 and 21, God says, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” So without Christ, there can be no peace. You remember our Lord said in Matthew 24, verses 6 and 7, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars.”

Scripture therefore assumes the fact and the reality of war and the fact and reality of fighting. One of the problems that we have as Christians is that, in reality, we are not biblicists. What do I mean by that? We have not actually developed a biblical attitude in every area, in every sphere of our life. We tend to be brainwashed and propagandized by television, by humanism, and by public education instead of submitting our minds to the Word of God.

The truth of the matter is this: when we fail to acknowledge the total depravity of man, and when we fail to acknowledge the fact that all men by nature are opposite to God and desire to be God, they play God by being tyrannical and totalitarian. If we believe that somehow man is innately good and not totally depraved, and that somehow man is always going to look out for the other and do what is best for himself and everybody else, that is certainly insane. Man by nature does not look out for other people. Man by nature looks out for himself. Man by nature does what he wants to do, contrary to God and contrary to the Word of God. That is why the Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 6, especially verses 14 through

18, warns believers not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

Then he argued, “What fellowship hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial?” And then he says, “None.” Then he said, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.”

The truth of the matter is this: Biblicism—that is, Christianity—has nothing in common with Communism. Christianity and humanism are diametrically opposed to each other. You cannot be a Christian humanist. You cannot be a Christian socialist. You cannot be a Christian communist. Those terms are totally opposite of each other. It is like someone saying, “He is a Christian drunk.” You cannot be a drunk and be a Christian at the same time.

When we take a Biblicist approach, we understand the fact and reality of Scripture that man is totally depraved. Inevitably, because of the consequences of sin, there is going to be war and fighting. War and fighting are assumed in the Bible.

Numerical Odds Are Inconsequential to People of Faith

Notice, if you would please, back in Deuteronomy 20 and verse 1. Here is the second truth: numerical odds are inconsequential to the people of faith. “When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” When you see a people more than you, be not afraid.

Do you realize that odds only count when you live by sight? They do not count when you live by faith. In the book of Numbers, chapter 13, Moses sent out the spies. Only two spies brought back a true and accurate report: Joshua and Caleb. The other spies said, “You should have seen what we saw. We saw cities that are walled up into heaven, and we saw the children of Anak there, the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants.” They said, “We were, as in our own eyes, as grasshoppers; and so we were in their eyes.”

What were they saying? These people are too many, too big, and too strong. There is no way in the world that we can conquer them. When you get to Numbers, chapter 14, Joshua and Caleb stilled the people and said, “We’re well able to overcome them. We’re well able to whip them because we have God on our side.” Instead of listening to Joshua and Caleb, the people listened to the other spies. They despised God and despised what God had given them, and they wanted to appoint a captain and turn back and go into Egypt.

God said, “These men are not going to inherit my land.” Why? Because they were not people of faith; they were people of sight. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 3:17-19 that God was sore displeased with these people, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness for forty years. What did He say? “They entered not into that rest because they believed not.” They were not a people of faith. They were indeed a people of sight.

I want you to understand that odds are inconsequential to a people of faith. In 2 Chronicles, chapter 14, verses 9 through 13, Zerah the Ethiopian came against Asa with a host of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots. Here was a million warriors and three hundred chariots, and they came to Mareshah. Asa, King Asa, went out against him and set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. Asa cried unto the Lord, saying, “Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude, O Lord. For Thou art our God. Let no man prevail against Thee.” Asa and that small number defeated Zerah and the million Ethiopians.

When he saw us outnumbered, his attitude was not one of sight, but of faith. He said, “God, it doesn't matter to you. You can use a lot or you can use a few. You're the God of the battle. You're the God of the army. You're the one who gives the victory.”

I'm reminded of an incident in World War I involving General Chesty Puller. They came to him and said, “Sir, the enemy is in front of us.” He said, “They are.” They said, “The enemy is behind us.” He said, “Is that right?” They continued, “Moreover, the enemy is to the right of us. The enemy is also to the left of us.”

Chesty Puller said, “Good. We have them right where we want them. They can't get away from us now.”

That's faith, folks. Have you ever noticed how easily we are discouraged when we're outnumbered? Inevitably, you hear somebody say, “Well, there are so many on the other side.” That really doesn't matter. Have you understood that God usually has a minority, and God usually works with and uses the minority?

What if Noah had sat down and said, “There's so many on the other side; maybe they're right. I don't think I'll build that ark”? What if Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had said, “Everybody's bowing down; why should not we?” What if Daniel had said, “Nobody else is praying. Maybe I shouldn't pray”?

The fact that the odds are stacked against us really is inconsequential to a people of faith. Our Lord took five loaves and two fishes and fed 5,000 men, not counting the women and the children. He took Gideon and 300 men and destroyed the entire Midianite army.

If you are indeed a person of faith, listen carefully: you don't see how great the enemy is. You see how great, how powerful, and how magnificent our sovereign, omnipotent Lord is. He is well able to take care of exceedingly great numerical odds. So, first of all, war is indeed assumed in Scripture. Secondly, numerical odds are inconsequential to the people of faith.

Superior Armaments Are Inconsequential to the People of Faith

Superior Armaments Are Inconsequential to People of Faith

“When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them.” Superior armaments are inconsequential to the people of faith. Horses and chariots were offensive weapons. It is true they may be used defensively, but mainly they were for purposes of aggression.

Chariots and horses were pretty well known as the tanks and the bombers back in Bible times. They were the heavy artillery, the heavy equipment. Have you ever noticed how easily we become discouraged when we see such powerful armament? We think, How in the world can we survive? People say, “Look at all the technology that's available today. Look at all the weapons.” It is almost incomprehensible for me to believe this, but this was a weapon back in Vietnam: a machine gun that was usually shot from a helicopter, and one burst would put a bullet in every square inch of a football field. That's incomprehensible to me, but yet it's true.

They have weapons today using microwave technology that they can shoot and basically melt the skin off the bones. It's unbelievable. But it really doesn't matter what the enemy has. Pharaoh had his army and all of his chariots, but what good is a chariot in the bottom of the Red Sea? God destroyed the Amorites in Joshua 10 with hailstones. In Deuteronomy chapter 7 and verse 20, God used hornets to destroy an enemy; hornets chased them out of the land. Do you know what God used to bring the Philistines down? Hemorrhoids.

If that's what it is, that's what God used. You can't fire too much when you have a bad case of hemorrhoids. You can't run too quickly either. But the point is this: it doesn't matter how great the armament is; if God is not on your side, all of those armaments are useless. Goliath, the well-trained, well-equipped warrior from his youth, fell before a young boy named David who used a slingshot.

The Lord Thy God Is with Thee

I'd rather have a bow and arrow with the blessings of God upon it than a machine gun and a million rounds of ammo without the blessing of God. The truth of the matter is this: Samson picked up the jawbone of an ass and slew a thousand Philistines. It is not the armament that counts; it is the blessing and the power of God. Slingshots and jawbones are more than sufficient when they have the blessing and power of God upon them.

Notice what God said: “Be not thou afraid of them.” It does not matter about superior numbers or superior weaponry. God says,

"Be not afraid of them." The Bible says in 2 Timothy chapter 1 and verse 7 that God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. We are not to be afraid of the enemy or live in fear. Proverbs 29 and verse 25 says that the fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall dwell safely.

The Stated Advantage: God's Presence and Power

Why should we sit back in fear when we know that we have the sovereign, omnipotent God of heaven and earth on our side? That brings me to this fourth point. Look in verse 1 again, and you will see the major difference, or the stated advantage: "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them." Why should we not be afraid of superior numbers and superior weaponry? Here is why: "For the Lord thy God is with thee."

Do you remember in Exodus chapter 33, Moses was talking to the Lord and praying, and God said to Moses, don't be afraid? "My presence shall go with you." In verse 15, Moses said, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." Moses said, I do not want to go anywhere, Lord, that you do not go. And you know what God told Joshua in Joshua 1 and verse 5? "There shall not be any man able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." God said, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

This principle is applied in verse 2: "It shall be when you come nigh unto the battle, that the priests shall approach and speak unto the people." There were always ministers in a battle, before the battle. It may surprise you to learn that the priests and Levites led the army into battle, singing praises to the Lord and sounding the trumpets. The priest went out and said, "Hear, O Israel, you approach this day into battle against your enemies."

"Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them." Over and over, you cannot faint; you are not to fear, tremble, or be terrified. What in the world is going to stop a man from being afraid when he sees superior numbers and superior weaponry? Here is why: "For the Lord your

God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies to save you."

Note the presence: the Lord your God goeth with you. Note the power to fight for you against your enemy. Note the protection to save you. There are many books written about the providential history of America. Do you remember the evacuation of Long Island, when George Washington and his troops were basically surrounded by the British, and it looked like the end of the colonial soldiers? God sent in a fog so thick and heavy that those little boats rowed back and forth until they had evacuated all of Washington's little army. It was all by the blessing and power of God. Certainly, the British had superior numbers and superior weaponry, but God used a fog.

It requires faith to be fearless and undiscouraged in light of the circumstances. Do you remember how Elisha was in Dothan? The Syrians were trying to capture the king of Israel. Finally, the king of Syria said to his men, "What's going on? Who is it that's betraying me? Someone warns the king of Israel of my plans before I can ever execute them."

And his servant said, "There's not a traitor in your tent." But he said, "It's Elisha, the man of God in Dothan. He tells the king of Israel everything that you say in your bedchamber, and tells him not to go where you plan to attack because he knows." So the king of Syria sent his entire army to Dothan and surrounded it. When Elisha's servant arose the next morning, he saw a vast army of Syrians surrounding the town and cried, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" Elisha said, "Fear not. They be far more that are with us than they that are with them." Then he said, "Lord, I pray thee, open the young man's eyes." God opened his eyes, and he saw angels surrounding the entire army. Elisha said, "Smite them with blindness, O God," and God did exactly that. Elisha then led them to the king of Israel. The king wanted to smite them, but Elisha said, "No, you are not going to smite them. You do not smite prisoners captured in battle. These are my prisoners."

After the Syrians had been blinded, Elisha said, "Feed them and let them go." The Bible said the Syrians came no more against the king of Israel. I do not think I would want to fight against him

either. The point is that it requires faith. Elisha was a man of faith. Remember Romans 8:31: “And what shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” God's people are to be a people of faith.

In Deuteronomy chapter 20, four things have been established. First, fightings and wars are an assumed fact in Scripture. Secondly, numerical odds are inconsequential to the people of faith. Thirdly, superior armaments or weaponry mean absolutely nothing; they are also inconsequential to the people of faith. The major difference, or stated advantage, is that we have the sovereign God of heaven and earth on our side.

Exemptions from Military Service

When the Israelite militia was mustered, all males from twenty years old and upward presented themselves. However, not all of them went to war. In some cases, as in Numbers chapter 31, only 1,000 from each tribe went to war—12,000 at that particular time. In all cases, there were exclusions and exemptions from military service. Why were there these exclusions and exemptions? The Bible says, in verses 5, 6, and 7, that these exclusions were “lest he die.”

That brings me to a very important point: men die in battle, even righteous men, even when they are fighting for a righteous cause. It is true that God generally and sovereignly protects His own in battle. Before every battle, the soldiers gave a shekel, that is, atonement money, or a half shekel, to the sanctuary. That atonement money was for his life in case he died in battle. Yet God does sovereignly protect His people. In Numbers chapter 31, 12,000 Israelite soldiers went into battle against the cities of Midian, and during these battles they slew all the men of Midian.

They brought back 675,500 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 asses, and 32,000 unmarried women, all without the loss of one soldier. Not one Israelite died in those battles in Numbers chapter 31. God is indeed able to protect His own at all times. But there are some times God's sovereignty allows righteous men to die in battle, even when they are fighting for a righteous cause.

The answer is really very simple. It is God's will to heal most of the time. Everyone in this room has been sick and has gotten well. But it is not God's will to heal all of the time, because if He healed all the time, no one would ever die. The Bible says, "The wages of sin are death."

This is true in reference to war as well. We must remember that death is a part of life. Everyone in this room, if our Lord tarries, is going to die. You cannot die without having lived. God has not only ordained the end; He has also ordained the means to that end. In Job 7, verse 1, the Word of God says, "Is there not an appointed time for man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hireling?" The very days of our lives are numbered. Job 14, verse 5, says, "Seeing his days are numbered, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." We are not going to live one minute or one second past the time that God has ordained that we die. David said in Psalm 31 and verse 15, "My times are in thy hands."

In Psalm 66 and verse 9, he said, "He, God, holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved." Sometimes righteous men do die in battle, even when they are fighting for a righteous cause. Look at Stonewall Jackson, one of the most godly men that ever lived, and yet he was killed in battle by his own men. Look at Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was a godly man. Joab was a murderer. And yet Uriah died, and Joab did not die in battle.

Warfare is not child's play. It is grim, gruesome, and ugly, but it is necessary from time to time. In war, many people die. We must remember that, according to the Word of God, war is waged upon the wicked, who were already under God's judicial sentence of death. Thus, when God brought Israel out of Egypt, He put the sword in their hand and instructed them to slay every one of those Canaanites.

Rushdoony, in his book Institutes of Biblical Law, said, "If warfare is to punish or to destroy evil, the work of restoration requires that this be done, that an evil order be overthrown, and in some cases, some or many people executed." The point is that when you start punishing evil and exercising biblical justice, men

die—oftentimes not just the wicked, but sometimes the righteous as well.

Thus, in Deuteronomy chapter 20, God gives us some exemptions. Here are men who, although able and qualified to fight, were told by God that they should not fight. Who does God exempt from military service? Look down in verse 5. The first one exempted is the man who has built a house and not dedicated it: "And the officer shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it."

When we talk about a house dedication, many think of a little ceremony. I have dedicated houses. Christians have had me come in for prayer and Scripture reading, saying, "Pastor, come in for prayer, read some scripture. We want to give this house to the Lord. We want to use it for Him. And we want our doors to be open to all of God's people."

Usually, when we think about dedicating a house, we think about a little ceremony that takes fifteen, twenty, or thirty minutes. That is the furthest thing from the truth when the Bible speaks about dedicating a house. The word dedicate is chanak in Hebrew, and it literally means to narrow, discipline, train, dedicate, or initiate. The root word chanak is translated as “trained servants” in Genesis 14:14. Abraham had 318 trained, or dedicated, servants. In 2 Chronicles 7:5 and 1 Kings 8:63, this same word is used of the priests or Levites being trained in offering sacrifices unto God. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Train up a child in the way that he should go.” Literally, dedicate the child in the way that he should go.

The word train means to initiate or to discipline. The Jews have a feast called Hanukkah, which comes from this same word, chanak. It was a celebration of the restoration of the temple in 165, after they got rid of Antiochus Epiphanes. The dedication of a house, then, is not merely some little ceremony; it is the training and discipline of that house. Therefore, the young husband had to be exempt from service in order that he might train his wife, discipline his children, and train them as well.

Notice verse 5: “And the officer shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house?” The house is already built, and he is already living in it. “And hath not dedicated”—that is, he has not trained his wife and children in the ways of truth and righteousness. So God says, Here is a young man. He has a wife. He has children.

He has not had time to teach them or train them. God says he is exempt. Why? Lest he die in battle and another man dedicate, train, or bring up his children. Does every man want to bring up his children the way he thinks they ought to be brought up? That is exactly what this verse is talking about. The young husband who has a young wife and young children is to be exempt until he trains and disciplines his children.

That is the first exemption. The second is in verse 6: “And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? Let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man eat of it.” Here is a man who has planted a vineyard but has not eaten from it.

When we hear this, we automatically think, “That is simple. Just pick a few grapes, taste them, and keep going.” But it did not work that way. This military exemption could last five years, depending on when the vineyard was planted. Leviticus 19:23 explains why: “And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised. Three years shall it be uncircumcised unto you: it shall not be eaten of.”

“But in the fourth year, all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the Lord withal. And in the fifth year, ye shall eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof. I am the Lord your God.” During the first three years, all the fruit was unclean. In the fourth year, God received it all, and in the fifth year, it could be eaten. Therefore, in Deuteronomy 20:6, when a man has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it, that exemption could last from one year up to five years, depending on when it was planted.

Now, look in verse 7. Here is the third exemption: “And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her?”

The exemption for the newly married man would last at least a year and could last longer, depending on circumstances. Deuteronomy 24:5 explains it: “When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business, but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.” God says, basically speaking, that he has a year's honeymoon: stay at home and take care of your wife.

But what if the blessings of God give them a child that first year? Then he falls back under the first exemption mentioned in verse 5. Here, then, is the exemption for a young man who has gotten married: God says he is to be free for one year.

The fourth exemption in Deuteronomy 20 is found in verse 8: “And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his own heart.” Anyone who was fearful or fainthearted was exempt.

Consider Judges 7:2-3, what God told Gideon: “And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to proclaim in the ears of all the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead. And there returned to the people twenty and two thousand, and ten thousand remained.” When the offer was made, whoever was fearful and fainthearted was to leave. Twenty-two thousand of Gideon's thirty-two thousand men left him. There was a reason God wanted the fainthearted and the fearful—the soft and the easy—out of there.

The fifth exemption was one other group that was always exempt: the Levites, or the preachers. Usually, however, although they were exempt, they not only volunteered, and many times you

find the Levites fighting; they were often the ones leading the battle, either through praise, through music, or through prayer.

Numbers 1, verses 48 through 49, says, “For the Lord had spoken unto Moses, saying, Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel.” So the Levites were not to be numbered. They were not to be counted. They were not to be mustered as fighting men.

Why does God give these exemptions? First, let me answer them, or try to answer them, down the line. As important and as necessary as defense is, the family has priority over warfare. The family has priority over warfare. Soldiers cannot be produced without solid, stable homes. Have you ever realized that without the family, without solid, stable families, you not only do not have a society, you do not have a church, you do not have a civil government, and you do not have an army?

I want you to think with me for a moment about how unbiblical, unethical, and immoral our modern-day practices are. We take young men and snatch them out of their families, away from their wives, and send them overseas, sometimes for a year, sometimes longer, separating them from their wives and their children. This leads to adultery, fornication, the breakup of homes, and divorces. God says no. The family has priority over warfare. It is true that wars must be fought, but God says they are not to be fought at the expense of the family, because if you destroy the family, you destroy the basis for society.

Why was the young man who had married the wife to be exempt for a year? You know as well as I do that a young husband whose mind is constantly and consistently on his wife cannot be dedicated and single-minded when it comes to battle. His thoughts are elsewhere. His thoughts are not in fighting. He wants to be home with that new wife. And so God says, do not put him there.

Similarly, farmers are to be excluded as well, because someone must feed the army. Those who have not had time to eat are producing, and so God says they are exempt.

These exemptions refer, basically, to those who have not had time to enjoy covenant life. They have not had time to enjoy their

house, their wife, or their wine, so to speak. I am using that based upon Micah 4 and verse 4: “But they shall sit every man under his vine, and every man under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.”

What is God saying? Here is the blessing of covenant life: you can sit under your own vine and your own fig tree and enjoy the things of God. It is only as you mature that you begin to appreciate the things God has given you—the life, strength, and health He has given you.

I am not going to say that I am 100 percent successful in what I am about to tell you, but there are very few days that go by in my life when I do not awaken and first thank the Lord for life, strength, and health. My wife and I both attended our fortieth class reunion this year. That tells you how old we are. She is older than I am, though; she had hers first. I told her I did not know we went to school with such old folks.

I saw men my age come in with walkers, some pulling oxygen bottles, and others with contraptions on their arms and legs. One of my best friends, whom I grew up with, had already had six bypasses. We had not been to a doctor in thirty years. Do you understand why I am thankful and grateful to the Lord?

If God has allowed you to live and enjoy your wife or husband, your home, and your grandchildren, you ought to be thankful. That is why God exempts these men: they never had time to do that. I am a deer hunter, and I enjoy hunting. I have folks who come to my house who hunt, and some of you have done so. They can testify that I always say, “Do not kill a little deer. Do not kill a yearling. Do not kill a baby.” I will not shoot something like that. God has spared me and allowed me to grow and enjoy life. Let them grow up and enjoy life for a while. You will understand that when you get a little older. Some of you already understand it.

God is saying, here is why there is this exemption. Do you realize it is only when the curse of God is upon a people that they do not enjoy the blessings of covenant life? That is why Deuteronomy 28 and verse 30 says, under the curses of God, "Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her.

Thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein. Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and thou shalt not gather the grapes thereof." In other words, God says, when you are under my curse, you will not be able to enjoy the blessings of covenant life.

Fourthly, God says the fearful and the fainthearted are released from service for two basic reasons. First, God's battles are to be fought in faith, and fear is the opposite of faith. Secondly, God is weeding out the deserters up front. He says, "lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." God said, if that man is afraid, let him go. I would rather lose one than lose ten or fifteen, because that one fainthearted man will affect someone else. Thus God is simply weeding out the deserters up front.

Only after these exemptions and those who are excused are dealt with are the captains appointed, and then they head into battle. We have seen the military exemptions and the fact that fighting and wars are assumed. Now look at some of the rules and regulations of military fighting.

Rules of Engagement: Offer of Peace and Conduct in War

We have deviated so far from the Word of God in every area of our life that when we hear a simple message on something like this, we are angered and horrified. We are angered because we had not heard it before, and horrified because we have sinned against God in so many areas of our lives. It is a wonder the judgment of God has never fallen on us more fully. Sometimes in unbelief we sit back and say, "That will not ever work." Well, sure it will work because it is biblical and because it is right. One of these days, science is going to catch up with God. For He said in Malachi 3, "I, the Lord, change not." And He does not change. I could give you many illustrations on that, but let us go on down in Deuteronomy chapter 20.

Before the battle, God requires that, prior to an attack or declaration of war, an offer of peace be extended to the enemy: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make an answer of peace and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that

is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, thou shalt besiege it."

"And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it in thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself. And thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations, but of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance. Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. But thou shalt utterly destroy them, namely the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that they teach you not to do after all their abominations which they have done unto their gods, so should you sin against the Lord your God."

This offer of peace is not a negotiation or a compromise. It is based upon truth, right, and justice. The enemy must yield, submit, and surrender in order to obtain peace. If there is going to be peace, says God, it will be peace on the terms of truth, righteousness, and justice. The right must always be maintained.

The offer is necessary to avoid excessive violence and bloodshed. If it is refused, there is to be full-scale war, and all the males are to be annihilated. Basically, here is what you have: We will either have peace in life on terms of justice, or death and destruction on terms of justice. It is not a compromise or a negotiation. If they submit, then they become tributaries.

The word tributary is the word mas, which literally means someone who is taxed in the form of labor or money. You will find that many of the enemies in the land who were not destroyed were made tributaries. Sometimes, when Israel was conquered because of her rebellion against God, Israel was made a tributary. A tributary was not a slave in the practical sense. The people went on about their lives in the normal sense of the word, but they were forced to support a superior nation, a superior society, and a

superior law order. That is what God is saying: You make an offer of peace. If they accept, they become the support for a superior society and a superior law order.

God says in Deuteronomy 4, verses 6 through 8, that all these other nations will hear of His laws and understand that this is their wisdom and righteousness. Never has any other nation had a law so righteous as the one He has given. The only exception to this offer of peace was the nations God mentioned in verse 17: the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. God says, No, do not offer them peace. They are under God's curse and ban. They were under the judicial sentence of death from God. Therefore, God says, you cannot offer them peace.

Here is the principle: We are to try to avoid bloodshed if possible. What do we do? We make an offer of peace. We say, You submit and surrender to these terms—to God's terms. What happens if they refuse? God said, You kill all the men.

If you have to fight, you fight to win. When you fight to win, you win in such a manner that you will not be refighting the same battle the next year or two years thereafter. Moreover, if all the men are killed, basically the women will then intermarry or marry somewhere else, and that whole culture is basically destroyed. Therefore, you will not be fighting that war again anytime soon.

God is saying that there must be an offer of peace; but if it is refused and you have to fight, you fight to win, so that you do not have to do it again any time soon.

The second principle is that war is not to be waged against creation or nature, but against man. “When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, and make war against it, to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them. For thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down.

“For the tree of the field is man's life, to employ them in the siege. Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down. Thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued.”

Here is what God is saying: these verses prevent wanton destruction. There is to be no scorched-earth policy like Sherman's against the South. That is wicked and wrong. It is a violation of Scripture. God says that fruit-bearing trees are not to be destroyed. The only trees that may be destroyed are those not fit for food. Creation is not the sinner; man is. God says you do not make war against His creation.

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes, chapter 5 and verse 9, "Moreover the profit of the earth is for all. The king himself is served by the field." God says you do not cut down or destroy trees that can be used for food.

What God is telling us is that production has priority over politics. When Sherman came through the South, he destroyed everything: salted fields, burned homes, destroyed crops, and shot cattle. In so doing, he, Sheridan, and Lincoln elevated politics above production. Since that time, practically every president since Lincoln has done the same thing. Witness Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his New Deal. The production of practically everything is now controlled by politics.

Try farming one year. Suppose you intend to grow one hundred acres of peanuts. You will grow however many peanuts the government tells you that you can grow. If you insist on growing one hundred acres, they will only let you sell ten acres, because you cannot sell without their number and permission. We do not have supply and demand in this country as you think; we basically have socialism or fascism, however you want to say it, because government controls production.

God is saying that is wrong. Politics does not have priority over production. A second implication is that war is not to be waged against productive citizens. If you read Psalm 1 and Judges 9, you will find that sometimes trees in the Bible are symbols of man. You do not make war against innocent citizens or against productive citizens who are not fighting against you.

Like we did when we bombed Dresden in Germany, and just destroyed people and factories and production. You see, the truth is this: if you destroy all the productive people and all the produce,

once you win the war, who is going to rebuild? God is saying that we are not to make war against His creation. We are not to make war against nature.

Here is a third one: the law of booty provides a reward for the soldiers. In Deuteronomy 20:14, we read, “But the women and the little ones and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee.”

May I remind you that this is not rape. This is not pillage. This is not plunder. There has been a battle. There has been an offer of peace, based upon righteousness and justice. The enemy has now been defeated, and God says that the soldiers may take the plunder. You will find this in Numbers 31. This booty was divided between the soldiers. Many times it was divided not only half between those who actually fought, but also between the other soldiers who did not actually fight but would have fought. You will find that also in 1 Samuel 30:22-25.

Moreover, a percentage of the booty went to the church. In Numbers 31:28, God says, “...and levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle, one soul out of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep.” In verse 47, He says, “Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses.” The Bible says in 1 Chronicles 26:27, “Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate to maintain the house of the Lord.” Out of the spoils won in battles, many of the spoils were given to the Levites and to the church.

When it comes to the biblical doctrine of war, there is an amazing truth that will surprise you: no booty went to the state. None whatsoever.

David voluntarily shared some of his booty with those who had helped and defended him in 1 Samuel chapter 30. None went to the state, and none went to the king per se. The only way the king could get some was if he fought as well. Gideon, the leader and

commander of his army, had to ask his men for extra booty, and they voluntarily gave it. But he had to ask for it.

The point I am trying to make is this: If the state, the government, and politicians do not benefit from war, it will be a great restraint upon the initiation of wars of aggression. One of the problems we have today is that war is money. There are huge economic benefits from war. Listen to your news. I just heard them talking about how great our economy would be when we go to war with Iraq, because of all the labor and money that would be motivated, spent, and created. Let me tell you something, folks: A wartime economy may help temporarily, but it certainly will not help in the long run. Whenever you cut the politicians and the government out, you have no reason to have basically a war of aggression. War is a multi-billion-dollar industry—a multi-billion-dollar industry.

It is all right for soldiers to get paid for their work, but God said the booty does not go to the state. I heard George Bush say that if the United Nations did not give him a resolution against Saddam, he would lead a coalition against Saddam. I wonder if that means he was going over there and fighting himself. You reckon that is what it means? No. You know better than that. Would it not be wonderful if, in our country and in every country, when we had a war, all the leaders had to be on the front line first? That would tend to stop a war of aggression. When you consider the biblical doctrine of war, we have gone so far from the Bible, it is unbelievable.

Conclusion: Fight by Faith on God's Terms

As I said last night, it is your responsibility to make sure that when and if you have to fight, you fight biblically and scripturally. Make sure it is a holy cause and a just cause, and follow the biblical rules and regulations. If we want to win any battle, we must fight on God's terms, not ours, but God's terms. We need not be upset because the enemy has superior numbers or superior armaments.

God still has plenty of hornets left, and He can use something so small and so minute. Consider the fellow who got a paper cut on his finger and lost his life because of a flesh-eating virus. All God

has to do is raise up some little invisible virus that we cannot see, hear, sense, or smell, and God could wipe out an entire country.

We are to live and fight by faith and not by sight. Scripture says, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

Father, once again, we honor Thee this night. We thank Thee for Thy Word and for Thy truth. We pray that Thou would teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and enable us, Lord, to live our lives in conformity to the Word of God. Thou art the one true and living God; besides Thee, Thou art God alone, and there is none other. We give Thee praise. Help us, Lord. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Driven By the Devil

February 1, 2004

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 8:26-33 (KJV)

Open your Bibles to Luke chapter 8, and to Mark chapter 5 as well, because we will be looking at one verse there. The account in Mark 5 is parallel to the account in Luke 8, and we will take our text from Luke 8. The message is entitled "Driven by the Devil," and I think you will understand why in just a moment. Notice in Luke chapter 8, beginning with verse 26:

"And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee."

Luke 8, verse 27: "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man who had devils"—or demons—"a long time, and wear no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.' For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

> "For oftentimes it had caught him, and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters, and he broke the bands and was driven of the devil into the wilderness. And Jesus asked him, saying, 'What is thy name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain. And they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine. And the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake and were choked."

"When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled and went and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what was done and came to Jesus and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them. For they were taken with great fear, and he went up into the ship and returned back again. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to thine own house and show how great things God hath done unto thee.' And he went his way and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

Introduction: Two Powers – God and Satan

The title of today's message is taken from verse 29, where the Bible says of the maniac of Gadara that he was "driven of the devil into the wilderness." One basically could reduce everything down to two forces: good and evil, or God and Satan. Naturally, the greatest force or power is God Himself. Scripture says in 1 John 4:4, "because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

In saying that everything could basically be reduced to two powers, good and evil, or God and the devil, I am certainly not

denying the personhood of God. God is a person. But understand this: God reveals Himself through His creation, through His redemption, and through His power and His providence. Those three things—creation, redemption, and providence—are nothing more than a demonstration of His power. Likewise, Satan is declared in Scripture to be a fallen spirit. Although we cannot see him, we can see his handiwork through his power and his control over wicked and unconverted men.

Luke 8 is our text, but turn in your Bibles to Acts, chapter 26. Let me show you how the Apostle Paul described his own mission in Acts 26:18. Paul is giving his testimony to King Agrippa. Reading verse 17, he says, "delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."

The Apostle Paul's Mission: From Satan's Power to God

Here is why God sent Paul: “to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light,” and “from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” Note the words, “to turn them from the power of Satan unto God.” There is the power of Satan, and, of course, the power of God.

Colossians 1:12-13 teaches us the greatness of God's power: “giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet”—or suitable—“to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Here is why we should give thanks to the Father and how He has made us suitable to partake of that inheritance: He “hath delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” He took us from the power of Satan under the power of God, and from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His own dear Son. Certainly, the demoniac of Gadara in Luke 8 is a great illustration of an individual driven by the devil.

Led by the Spirit vs. Driven by the Devil

The question that should automatically enter your mind is this: How can one tell which is the motivating, empowering, and controlling force in an individual's life? More importantly, how can

I tell which power is in my life? The answer from Scripture is obvious. Scripture tells us that God leads us and the devil drives us. You have to ask yourself: Are you being led, or are you being driven? To answer that question, you must know what the leading of the Lord really is.

Romans 8:9-16 explains what the leading of the Spirit is. But this truth has been abused, misused, misapplied, and perverted by many professing Christians. It has become an excuse for every whim, desire, sin, and disobedience imaginable. All one has to do to explain irrational and unbiblical behavior is say, “The Spirit led me to do it.” Who can argue with God? And who can say that the Holy Spirit did not lead you?

People are trying to call God to vouch for their disobedience, their sin, and their wickedness. How, then, can we discern whether God has really led someone to do something? Let me give you a couple of illustrations. When Alice and I lived in Greenville, South Carolina, a woman there caught her husband asleep on the couch. She slipped up, put a .38 to his ear, pulled the trigger, and killed him. Her defense at her trial was that the Spirit led her to shoot her husband.

Now, you know better than that, I hope, and so do I. Since then, every time my wife tells me not to put my feet on the couch, I do not do it—just in case. No, you understand: God says, "Thou shalt not murder." God never led her to murder her husband. That is very clear. Another illustration concerned a preacher. He ran off with a woman in the church, left his wife, and then returned with the lame excuse that the Holy Spirit led him to run off with her because she was more spiritual than his wife. You understand what I am saying?

The leading of the Spirit has been used to cover every sin, every disobedience, every whim, and every wickedness imaginable. We are trying to call God to be our witness. Now, the truth is very simple. Are you listening? God, the Holy Spirit, never, ever leads us contrary to His Word, and He never, ever leads us contrary to His righteousness. Never. When someone tells you that the Holy Spirit led them to do something patently contrary to Scripture, you

know as well as I do that the Holy Spirit never, ever led them to do that.

Romans 8:9 says, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." This is how important the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is. If the Holy Spirit of God does not indwell us, we do not belong to Christ.

Verse 10 says, "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The Bible tells us it is the Spirit who quickens us, but He quickens us according to righteousness. "But the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

The True Leading of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-16)

What does the Spirit of life, who is righteousness, lead us to do? Romans 8:12-13 says, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The Holy Spirit leads us to mortify—that means subdue or to make dead—the deeds of the body. He leads us not to live according to the flesh, but according to the Word of God; in other words, to bring our lives into conformity with Holy Scripture.

Romans 8:15 says, "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The Holy Spirit leads us into biblical liberty and freedom, calling God our Father. Biblical liberty and freedom are liberty and freedom from sin, from Satan, from wickedness, and from ungodliness.

Verse 16 says, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." When we are living obediently, bringing our lives into conformity with the Word of God and living righteously, the Spirit Himself testifies that we are indeed the children of God. The Bible tells us in John 16:13 that it is the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth.

He does not lead us into error. He does not lead us into wickedness. He leads us into truth. So mark it down: The Holy Spirit never, ever leads us into sin, wickedness, disobedience, or ungodliness. If someone is engaged in such activity, I do not doubt for one moment that you were pushed into that activity, but you certainly were not led there by the Holy Spirit of God. Remember, the devil drives and God leads. Now, when God leads us, God leads us in such a way that we are willingly inclined to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. But it is the devil who pushes us relentlessly into sin and wickedness.

Turn in your Bibles to the book of James, chapter 3, and verse 4. There is a reason why I want you to see this. You remember in Luke 8:29, the Bible says that this maniac of Gadara was “driven of the devil.” Look in James 3:4. Let me show you the exact same Greek word. Here it is: “Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.” Note that phrase, “are driven of fierce winds.” It is the same identical word that is used in Luke 8:29, that he was “driven of Satan.”

It is the constant, continual driving that wears down the will. Now, I want you to understand something. The devil may drive us to do something. But it is our sin, it is our responsibility, regardless of how we get into that sin. And we cannot blame the devil for it, for we willingly sin. The devil may tempt us, he may seduce us, he may drive us, but it is we who sin.

The Bible says in James 1, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." So it is our sin. It is our responsibility.

Now look at the maniac of Gadara and how he was driven of the devil. I believe that you can see the applications of these truths to our society today. What was the first thing the devil drove this man to do? Mark 5:4 says, "Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by

him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him."

The Demoniac Driven to Injure His Health

Mark 5:5 continues, "And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." What was the first thing the devil drove him to do? The devil drove him to injure his health. Mark 5:5 says that he was always, night and day, in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

First of all, his mind was affected. How do we know that his mind was affected? It is very obvious. He was naked, for one thing, and secondly, he was living among the tombs. Either one is sufficient to demonstrate the fact that his mind was affected. Who in his right mind would want to live in a cemetery?

Keep in mind that cemeteries in those days were not like ours today. Through all types of funeral processes today, we can preserve a body for a long time. The best they could do back then was just wrap it in herbs to keep it from stinking so much. But who wants to live among corruption, putrefaction, and death? Only those who are demonically driven are willing to live in such places.

The very fact is in verse 35: "Then they went out to see what was done and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed." What is the next phrase? "And in his right mind." I want you to understand that all of those who are outside of Jesus Christ are really, truly not in their right minds. They are not.

The Bible says in Ephesians 4:17–18 that they are alienated from God through the ignorance that is in them. As the old-timers used to say, they are touched in the head. They are not right, not in their right mind. Likewise, please notice that it is only those who are outside of Christ today, even in our modern society, who really still want to live in corruption, putrefaction, and death. You have to be in a wrong mind, out of your mind, to live the way some people do.

His mind was affected, but not only was his mind affected; his body was abused. The Bible says that day and night he was in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones. Can you possibly think of the strain upon his vocal cords? I have preached for eight solid hours, except for a few moments, and afterward I was mighty tired, with mighty tired vocal cords. Here was a man screaming day and night. Not only was he crying, but he was cutting himself with stones. Think of the scars, disfigurements, and sores upon him. Undoubtedly, he suffered from malnutrition as well. What in the world possessed him to defile, harm, and destroy his body? The answer is very clear: it was a legion of demons.

When you and I are pushed to destroy our minds and bodies, it is not the leadership of the Holy Spirit; it is the devil. It is not the Holy Spirit who leads us to be drunkards, dope heads, or fornicators. It is not the Holy Spirit who leads us to destroy our bodies with white sugar, white flour, and white rice, or to neglect wholesome foods while gorging ourselves on snacks, candies, and cokes and destroying our immune system.

It should be plain and obvious that the Holy Spirit does not push us to overwork, overplay, and overindulge constantly and continually, depriving our bodies of needed rest and relaxation. God does not push us to destroy our bodies.

I preached for eighteen weeks straight without a day off. Back then, it was not once a day; I was preaching three and four times a day. We would have morning meetings and afternoon meetings. I'd be on the radio, and we'd even have night meetings. Eighteen weeks without a day off. You may not believe this, but it took me years to overcome what I did to my body in eighteen weeks. You've heard the old saying, "Well, bless God, I'd rather burn out for Jesus than to rust out." I certainly want to be faithful, but I do not believe that God ever leads us to destroy our bodies.

Know what the Bible said in Psalm 103:14? "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are but dust." Our Lord knows our limitations. He knows what we can do and what we cannot do. He knows what is humanly possible, but He also knows what is humanly impossible. I really believe it takes you hitting about fifty

before you realize that you cannot do everything and cannot live forever. When you are young, you think you can do it all, but you cannot. It is just that simple.

The point is this: the Holy Spirit never, ever leads us to injure our health. If our mind is affected, if our bodies are abused, it is the devil who drives us, not God who leads us.

Driven to Indecency, Broken Homes, and Family Shame

Secondly, look in Luke chapter 8. The Bible tells us that the devil drove him to indecency. Verse 27 says, “And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man who had devils a long time, and wear no clothes, neither abode in any house but in the tombs.” Undoubtedly, this man was indecent. That is the language used. The Bible tells us he was screaming at the top of his voice. Since he was demonically possessed, you probably do not have to guess what he was screaming, cursing, and saying. Undoubtedly, what he screamed was wicked and wrong. Exodus 20:7 says, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

The Bible has a great deal to say about our speech. Colossians 4:6 states, "Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.

First Timothy 1:6 says, "From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling." They are speaking worthlessly and needlessly. In 2 Timothy 1:13, Paul says, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

If we were to take the time, we could go through the Bible and see the type of speech that God condemns. The Bible speaks against vain words, enticing words, flattering words, words of vanity, malicious words, great swelling words, and feigned or hypocritical words. Matthew 12:36 states it very explicitly: "But I

say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Idle word.

Our Lord said in Matthew 5:37, "But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." What does He mean when He says, "Let your conversation be yea and nay"? It means that if we are men of our word, and if we keep our word, we do not have to punctuate what we say. It is just that simple. When I say yes, that is emphatic enough. When I say no, that is emphatic enough. I do not have to take my speech and punctuate it with ridicule, sarcasm, or profanity. What He is saying is, make sure your speech is always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how to answer every man.

The devil drove him not only to injurious health. He drove him to indecency—not only in the fact of the language that he used, but also in the fact that he was naked. Luke chapter 8 says, "he wear no clothes."

When you look down to verse 35, after our Lord saved him, you find him clothed as well as in his right mind. I want to challenge you to do something sometime. Get a concordance or one of your Bible programs on the computer and look up the word "nakedness." Do you know the word "nakedness" occurs 57 times in our Bibles? In each instance, when the word "nakedness" refers to our bodies, nakedness is condemned.

It is true that Adam and Eve were naked in the garden, the Bible says, and they were not ashamed. But that was before they sinned. After they sinned, what did God do? God slew an animal and clothed them.

The point I'm trying to make is this: Parading our nakedness is a denial of our sin. When we are exposing our bodies, we're saying we're not sinners, but we are. Nakedness is condemned. You've heard of these "back to Eden" movements, where everybody wants to go back and live nude? There cannot be a "back to Eden" movement without redemption, without Christ, because nakedness, parading it, is a denial of sin. Besides that, we're not going back to Eden. We're going to an eternal state and not a temporary state as such. But the devil drove him, not only in the

language that he used, but in the nakedness of his body. So the devil drove him to indecency.

The Holy Spirit never leads us to be indecent. He never leads us to injure our health. Here's the third thing the devil did: The devil drove this man to break up his home. He had a home. For in verse 39, our Lord told him, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee." He had a house. He had a home. Our Lord told him to return there. But what kind of family life could this man possibly have had living out in the tombs and in the mountains?

The answer is none. His family was fractured, divided, and basically ruined. Something that is surprising is that the divorce rate today is 50% among Christians. There is something seriously and terribly wrong with that. We have become a society of selfish, self-indulgent, and suicidal people. We destroy ourselves, our children, our mates, our families, and our homes. How in the world do we do that?

Look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 8. I know that everyone in here knows this verse, but notice it. The Bible says, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Now, if you were to read the whole context, of course, it is talking about physical and material things, but he is talking about taking care of the widows and taking care of your own family. So he said, "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Now, what has happened is this. So many men today—and Christian men at that—say, "Well, I work. I put food on the table. I buy clothes for my children and for my wife. I mean, I've got a roof over their heads. What more can you ask?" And what we do is this: we limit that truth just to physical or material things. Now, the truth is you ought to provide the physical and material things for your family.

It is not my responsibility to provide for your family unless I do it generously, graciously, lovingly, and willingly. It is not my

responsibility to be taxed and stolen from so that you can have something. Biblical charity is one thing; forced welfare is a horse of a different color.

Every man ought to take care of his own. But our Lord told the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” When we talk about providing for our families physically and materially, we ought to do that. But unhappily, in doing that, most of us are leaving the others undone.

We fail to provide for them emotionally, educationally, and spiritually. We have given our children things, but not love; food, but not values; religion, but not Christianity; a degree, but not an education. The evidence is that our children today do not know how to live, survive, obey, share, love, or serve. They despise principles, truth, heritage, and Christianity. Although most have been raised in church, they live as practical atheists, denying the truth of the Word of God and trying to live as if God had no say-so over their lives whatsoever.

It was the devil who drove him to break up his home. Look at the divorce, the adultery, and the fornication. Every young man, every husband, and every father ought to read Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 over and over until it is burned in his mind. Scripture warns against adultery and fornication and says that everything ought to be done to maintain the sanctity of the home and marriage.

God does not lead us into adultery or fornication. We may go there, but God is not leading us there. He does not lead any husband or wife to defile the sanctity of marriage vows. He does not lead any child to rebel, nor families to fuss, fight, fume, and foment strife and division. You may be driven to do some of these things, but you had better consider who is in the driver's seat. God is neither your pilot, co-pilot, nor chauffeur if you are being driven to do them.

It's the devil who drives us to injure our health, to indecency, and, of course, to break up our homes. Then look back in Luke 8,

in verse 27, because here's the fourth thing the devil did. He drove him to bring shame upon his family. Look in Luke 8:27: "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man who had devils a long time, and wear no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs."

Would it not embarrass you and shame you if your father went around naked, screaming and acting crazy and silly and stupid? Well, of course it would. Everyone knew who the crazy man was. Everyone knew who the crazy man's wife was. Everyone knew who the crazy man's children were. Can you imagine the ridicule, the harassment, and the teasing through which his family went? Children can be exceedingly cruel. Undoubtedly, this man's children were the object of ridicule and scorn. Undoubtedly, his family was the object of jokes and sneers and sarcasm.

The Holy Spirit does not ever lead us to bring unbiblical shame upon our families. There is a shame that is biblical. When we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, that is one thing. That's a biblical shame. But whatever we do to bring an unbiblical shame upon our family, it's not of God. Every community has a drunkard, and everybody knows who that drunkard is. Every community has a fornicator, and everybody knows who that is. Every community just about has a dope head, and everybody knows who that is. And they know who the family is as well. It's one thing to suffer shame for biblical principle. It's another thing to bring shame on your family through your own sin and stupidity.

David said it like this in Psalm 44:15. David said, "My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me." Can you imagine what it was like when David got caught in his adultery, in his wickedness? What did he say? "My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me." How could he face his children? How could he face his wife? How could he face his kingdom? How could he face his people?

I was preaching in a little town, and on the back two pews sat a number of teenagers with their parents. The whole time I preached, they sat there with their heads down. They would not even look at me. After the service, I asked the pastor, “What in the world was wrong with those two pews of young people and their

parents? They held their heads down the entire service. What was wrong?"

He said, "This past week, all those teenagers got expelled from school for cheating. They were all seniors, which means now they have to go back and repeat that grade. Everybody knows what they have done." What did David say? "Shame on my face hath covered me." We never think about bringing an unbiblical shame upon our family, but if we would just stop and think: Why in the world would you throw away your life, your home, your marriage, your children, your grandchildren, your ministry, and your work for something that will inevitably shame you for a long time? Why would you do that?

I love my children more than that. I love my wife more than that. I love my grandchildren more than that. I love the ministry more than that. Listen to what the Bible says. I am being very selective. Let me give you four passages from the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 3:35 says, "The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools." The only way a fool can be promoted is in shame. Proverbs 10:5 says, "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." One thing that shames a family is to have a lazy son or lazy child.

Proverbs 13:18 says, "Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction: but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured." It is a shame to have someone who will not listen, who will not be instructed, and who will not learn. Unhappily, there are many people who have children like that.

I like a sign I saw a long time ago: "Attention all teenagers, please go ahead and run away from home now while you know everything and can do everything and can work everything out. Because in a few years, you'll understand you can't do any of it."

They are teenagers. There are adults. They will not listen. God says it is a shame. Proverbs 19:26 says, "He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach."

From these few short verses, laziness, disobedience, wastefulness, refusing to be instructed, and any and all types of public and private sin bring shame and reproach upon the family. Whatever you do to bring an unbiblical shame upon your family is not of God. God never leads us to shame our family. What does He say? "Honour thy father and thy mother."

Driven to Be a Nuisance to Society

Fifthly, the devil drove this man to be a nuisance to society. Luke 8:29 says, "For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness."

Let me put it to you very bluntly. Society could not control him. He was ungovernable. Society would clothe him, but he would rip the clothes off. Society would chain him in a secure place, but he would destroy the fetters and return to the tombs. Society tried, but they were helpless in light of their own spiritual powerlessness.

It takes more than society, refinement, culture, education, a country club membership, a church membership, or reformation to help a demoniac. It takes Christ. Society can educate people, refine them, and culture them, and, as our Lord said, they will still wallow in the mire and return like a dog to their own vomit. Why? Because the Bible says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Not in society, but "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." No one can live successfully in society without Christ.

Let me give you a quote. This came from President John Adams: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through the net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

What was he saying? When you throw off the bands of God, His truth, and His Word, our society is going to disintegrate, because our Constitution was only intended for a moral and a religious, or a

Christian, people. When men cast off the restraints of the Word of God, they become a nuisance to themselves, to their families, and to society as well.

Driven Too Far – To the Deliverer

Now, look back in Luke 8, verses 27 and 28: "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man who had devils a long time, and wear no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.'"

The sixth thing I want to point out is this: the devil drove him finally too far. He drove him to one who could deliver him. That's a wonderful thing. Many times the wicked overstep their mark. He ran to Christ, fell down, and said, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not." It may have been the demons crying out, but still the man was there. Christ cast the demons out and saved the man.

Now go down to verse 38: "Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying..." When the man was saved, he wanted to continue with Christ: "I'll go with you, Christ. I'll follow you. I'll do whatever you want me to do." But our Lord sent him away, saying, "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee."

Can you picture that wife and mother looking out her window and seeing her husband walking up to the house, fully clothed and in his right mind, undoubtedly singing maybe praise to the Lord? Can you imagine the joy in her heart when she thought, "I have my husband back. I have my home back."

And what about those little kids who have been embarrassed, shamed, and ridiculed? Can you imagine the joy and love in their hearts and eyes when once again they had a father? They had one who would love them, help them, teach them, educate them,

provide for them, and sustain them. It takes Jesus Christ to make a home.

Conclusion: Christ Alone Restores

I've often said, I really do not understand how any home makes its day without the Word of God, without Jesus Christ. With all the temptations, sins, flesh, and world, it is amazing to me that any couple ever stays together without Christ. You may have Christ, but if you do not apply the Word of God to your life, your home, and your marriage, you will lose home and marriage. It is not enough just to be saved. We must be saved and understand how to apply the Word of God.

You remember what our Lord said in Matthew 12:29? He said, “No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.” What does our Lord do? He binds the strong man, and then He spoils his house. Only Jesus Christ has the power to give us our lives, our families, our marriages, and our homes.

Some of us have unsaved children. You may have unsaved children. You may have wicked, wicked, wicked children. But one thing the devil does many times is push too hard and too far. Sometimes he pushes them right to the only one who can deliver them, and that's Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, we're so thankful today for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We're so thankful that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. We're so thankful, Father, that You are not just the answer, but our answer and my answer. Give us grace to serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

The Union's War Against Women & Children

August 7, 2005

Introduction and Biblical Principles

If you open your Bibles to Proverbs chapter 11, the message is entitled, "The Union's War Against Women and Children." Now, not only does this have a great historical truth and significance, I believe by the time we get to the end, you will also see that it has some practical applications for today. I just want to read two verses out of the book of Proverbs, and these verses, of course, relate to women. Proverbs 11 and verse 16, the Bible says, "A gracious woman retaineth honour: and strong men retain riches." But note if you would, "A gracious woman retaineth honour." Then if you look in Proverbs 12 and verse 4. Proverbs 12 verse 4, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband."

"But she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness to his bones." Now go back to the first half of that verse. "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." That is, she's very highly prized, very valuable, very dear. And the Word of God tells us that a gracious

woman is one that always retains honor. Let me begin by saying that August the 13th, some say August the 14th, one day, either way, does not matter. But August 13, 1863 is a date that will live in infamy. Because on that date, innocent and harmless women and children were murdered by the federal forces under the command of General Thomas Ewing.

Now, a biblical principle that is very plainly and clearly taught in the scriptures is this: that you do not make war upon citizens or civilians, and especially women and children. If you would turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 15. 1 Samuel chapter 15. You will remember when God sent King Saul to make war against the Amalekites. I want you to note what he did and what he said in 1 Samuel chapter 15 and verse 6. King Saul comes to the Kenites who happen to be in the way.

And here's what he said to them. "And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites." So God had sent King Saul against the Amalekites. He had not sent him against the Kenites. So Saul rightly, and I might also say righteously and justly, told the Kenites, since you're not involved in this war, you're citizens, you're civilians, you just get out of the way because we certainly do not want you to be harmed in any way whatsoever. So here's a principle then, you do not make war upon those who are not involved in the war and especially women and children.

A second principle is enunciated in Deuteronomy 20, the great passage on war. Verses 19 and 20 say:

"When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued."

When making war in a long siege, God said, you cannot cut down the trees that bear fruit from which men eat. If trees are to be used in a siege, they must be trees that are not fruit-bearing or edible. The principle is simple: you do not make war against creation; you make war against sinners.

Here, then, are two principles: you do not make war against innocent women and children, or civilians, and you do not make war against God's creation. Neither President Lincoln nor Generals Sherman, Sheridan, or Ewing believed in either principle. Everything that Sheridan and Sherman did to innocent men, women, and children was known and approved by Abraham Lincoln. General Ewing was brother-in-law to General Sherman. Evidently, these men had the same attitudes toward war and toward Southerners, because they believed that Southerners should be exterminated.

Union Leaders' Disregard for Biblical Principles

It was William Tecumseh Sherman, the man who left a 60-mile-wide, 300-mile-long path of death and desolation across Georgia and up through South Carolina, who wrote: "Look to the south, and you who went with us through that land can best say if they have not been fearfully punished. Mourning is in every household. Desolation written in broad characters across the whole face of their country. Cities in ashes. Fields laid waste. Their commerce gone.

Their system of labor was annihilated and destroyed, with ruin, poverty, and disease everywhere, and pestilence adding to the very capstone of their stack of misery. He was saying, “I destroyed literally everything in my path,” and he did. In a report dated October 7, 1863, General Sheridan wrote to General Grant:

“I have destroyed over 2,000 barns filled with wheat, hay, and farming implements; over 70 mills filled with flour and wheat; and I've driven in front of the army over 4,000 head of stock, and have killed, in addition to the troops, not less than 3,000 sheep. Tomorrow I will continue the destruction down to Fisher's Mill. When this is complete, the valley from Winchester to Staunton, 92 miles, will have but little in it for man or beast.”

In Virginia, Sheridan said that he wanted to make the Shenandoah Valley so desolate that, if a crow flew over, he would have to carry his own provisions. That is exactly what he was doing. Sheridan's troops burned crops and killed thousands of cattle and sheep just so they would not be used by Southerners. They then burned homes and turned women and children out into the freezing snow with only the clothes they had on their backs.

On January 31, 1864, General William Tecumseh Sherman said, “The government of the United States has any and all rights which they choose to enforce in war—to take their lives, their homes, their land, their everything. War is simply unrestrained by the Constitution. To the persistent secessionists, why get this mercy? And the quicker he or she is disposed of, the better.” Did you hear him say that the government has any and all rights which they choose to enforce in war? It does not matter whom they kill or whose property they confiscate; it is the right of government.

This war was not applied only against soldiers; it was applied against women and children. On June 21, 1864, Sherman wrote to Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton: “There is a class of people, women and children, who must be killed or banished before you can hope for peace and order.” Stanton replied, “Your letter of the 21st of June has just reached me and meets my approval.” War against civilians started far earlier than 1864, but this is proof that the war on women and children was indeed part of the Union scheme.

Neither womanhood nor childhood was held sacred to the federal soldiers. In fact, before I finish this message, you are going to see a clear demonstration of that reality.

Imprisonment of Women and Children in Missouri

In Missouri, if care packages of food or clothing were sent to sons, brothers, or husbands in the Confederate Army, many of those sending the gifts were arrested for giving care and comfort to the enemy. Many Missourian civilians were thrown in prison on such charges, including pregnant women and small children. One of those prisons was Gratiot Prison in St. Louis, Missouri.

During the War of Northern Aggression, Gratiot Street Military Prison was operated in St. Louis by the Union Army. It was unique in that it held not only Confederate prisoners of war, but also spies, guerrillas, civilians suspected of disloyalty, and federal soldiers accused of crimes and misbehavior. The names of 212 women and children appear on the list of prisoners—212 in this one prison. The most severe punishment usually imposed upon the women was banishment. However, a number of them were sent to the penitentiary in Jefferson City for extended confinement, or to the prison in Alton, Illinois. The women often had children with them, and at least some were carrying small babies. Usually, the male names directly under the women's names were those of young children there with their mothers.

One newly arrived female prisoner wrote on February the 7th, 1864, "Great heavens, my blood boils. Women in this hole of filth and blasphemy. I could scarcely believe it until I saw it with my own eyes. Mrs. Mitchell, who is here with a little daughter, five or six years old, she is charged with smuggling goods through to the Confederates. The northern armies move, making deserts in their tracks, and a loving woman is imprisoned for stretching out her hand to the needy. Other ladies are here besides Mrs. Mitchell, but I have not learned their names."

The wife of Mr. J.A. Coombs, Fanny, was arrested and put in prison for arranging what you and I would call a charitable event. In the eyes of the Union officers, it was designed to help suffering Confederates. Therefore, she was arrested for simply being disloyal. A multitude of women and children were arrested and imprisoned merely because they had husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons in the Confederate Army. The mentality of disrespecting and dishonoring women and children was prevalent in the Northern Army.

General Butler's Infamous Order No. 28

One Union general particularly loathed and despised by God-fearing people in the North and South was Benjamin Butler. Benjamin Butler had two nicknames. One was Beast Butler because he was a beast. The other was Spoons Butler, because he

was a thief who constantly and consistently stole silverware, and so he got the nickname Spoons. Butler was the Union commander in charge of New Orleans, Louisiana. He was a notorious thief, yet General Butler demanded honor and respect while he and his troops lived dishonorably and disrespectfully.

The women, particularly those of New Orleans, shunned Butler and his troops. Therefore, General Butler issued the infamous Order No. 26. It was this order that really infuriated the South. The order stated: "As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subject to repeated insults from the women calling themselves ladies of New Orleans, in return for the most scrupulous non-interference and courtesy on our part, it is ordered that hereafter, when any female shall by word, gesture, or movement insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town, plying her avocation."

Any woman who did not treat the conquerors courteously was to be treated as a prostitute. General Butler listed contemptuous acts that supposedly showed the women of New Orleans should be treated as prostitutes. Number one, they showed contempt when they left streetcars after Union soldiers boarded them. A woman might not have wanted to ride with them, or she might have reached her stop, but if she got off when a soldier got on, Butler considered that disrespectful. He also listed walking across the street rather than passing Union soldiers, singing Dixie in public, and turning their backs when Union soldiers walked by. Those were discourteous and contemptuous reasons, according to General Butler, that a woman was to be treated as a prostitute. When New Orleans Mayor John Monroe protested this order, General Butler had him arrested.

There was indeed outrage all over the South. What General Ewing, General Butler, and other northern generals failed to take into account was the Southern regard for women. Let me put it to you very bluntly: Southerners have historically been very protective of their wives, their daughters, and their sisters. This is a biblical principle. Let me enunciate it for you: First Peter, chapter three and verse seven.

Southern Regard for Women and Biblical Basis

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” What did God say to the husbands? To give honour unto the wife. You know what the Bible says in First Timothy, chapter five and verse one?

This applies to all men. The Bible says that we are to treat older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with all purity. What is he saying? We are to have respect and honor for older women and younger women as well. In 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 3, we are commanded to honor women, or to honor widows who are widows indeed. There is a place for respect and honor, especially when it comes to women. God expects us to treat them honorably, courteously, and respectfully.

If one wishes to raise the wrath of a godly man, there is an easy way to do it: simply harass, molest, or torment his wife, daughters, or grandchildren. Proverbs chapter 6, verse 32, says, “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.” “A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.”

In this particular passage, God singles out the wives. But God says that the man who molests and commits adultery with another man's—“Jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance, he will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.” In other words, there is a righteous anger, a righteous rage that cannot be pacified. It is a righteous rage and anger that cries out for justice.

Union officers did not understand that any action toward Southern women only infuriated and enraged Southerners more, making them more effective fighters. I could give you many Scriptures. One of them is, “children's children are the crown of old men.” I have often told people, if you mess with my girls, I

could chew you up and spit you out. But if you mess with my grandchildren, there is no telling what I might think of doing to you. Why? Because children's children are the glory of an old man.

Contrast Between Union and Quantrill's Treatment of Women

God is saying once again, here is something that will raise the righteous ire and wrath of any man who knows anything about biblical principles and truth. Yet Union General Blunt wrote to Colonel Benjamin F. Parker:

"I have instructed the officers in command of troops in the border counties of Missouri that every rebel or rebel sympathizer who gives aid directly or indirectly shall be destroyed or expelled from the military district. These instructions will not exempt females from the rule. Therefore, all persons known to be in arms against the federal authorities of this district will be summarily put to death when captured. The only constitutional right that will be granted them will be the right to make the choice of the quality of rope with which they will be hanged."

What did he say? These instructions will not exempt females. They would kill the women as they killed the men. It mattered not that the women were not in arms against the federal government. Their only constitutional right would be to decide the quality of rope with which they would be hanged.

Now I want to contrast General Blunt's attitude with that of Quantrill. Everyone has heard of William Clark Quantrill. He has always been portrayed as a bloodthirsty villain who never tired of killing. One of these days I want to bring a message on Quantrill's life. Quantrill was quite a scholar and a teacher; he became a guerrilla because of offenses done toward him, his family, and his property. Compare General Blunt's orders with those of William Clark Quantrill. Quantrill said, "If I find any man insulting a woman, I'll hang him from the first limb I come to."

He also said, "No matter how much a woman may abuse you, take her abuse. Let her talk and scold, but say nothing to her in resentment. We're fighting men, not women. No provocation will

excuse an insult or backtalk to a woman." Abusing a woman was an offense for which he would have a man shot or hanged very quickly. Consequently, no member of Quantrill's band was ever accused of insulting women. He said, "I'll have him shot or I'll have him hanged from the first limb I come to."

Federal soldiers had no such code of honor. In the spring of 1862, Mattie Brinker and a number of other Southern girls were seized by federal soldiers and used as human shields while they searched for Confederate guerrillas.

Captain Henry Fletcher sent fourteen soldiers to capture the Anderson girls. There were only three of them; I will tell you their names and ages in just a moment. When the soldiers arrived, a boy of about twelve to fourteen was there. Soon one of the soldiers noticed that the boy was missing. They assumed, rightly, that he had gone to get the guerrillas.

The soldiers quickly snatched up the Anderson girls and placed them on the lead horses in front of the Federal soldiers. When they came to a brick wall, three guerrillas jumped over it and began firing in the air. They had to fire over the girls' heads to keep from hitting them. One of the guerrillas unloaded a double-barrel shotgun full of buckshot, but fired over the girls' heads for the same reason. Consequently, the guerrillas could do nothing while the girls were being used as shields. They jumped back over the fence and escaped, since there were only three of them against fourteen soldiers. No one was hurt in the melee.

Arrest and Imprisonment of Quantrill's Female Relatives

However, Patrick Reddington, the officer in charge of the fourteen men, reported that if any of his men had been hit, he would have ordered the girls shot on the spot.

Union General Thomas Ewing—General Sherman's brother-in-law—was assigned to command what was known as the District of the Border. His task was almost impossible, because he was trying to stop Quantrill's men and a number of other raiders. You cannot help but have the utmost respect for the bravery of

these men. About 4,000 Confederate guerrillas kept 60,000 Union officers at bay. How could 4,000 keep 60,000 Union officers or soldiers at bay? First of all, it was hit and run.

It was indeed guerrilla tactics. Most of these guerrillas had six pistols; all of them had four. They carried two on their hips, wore shoulder holsters, and kept two extra pistols on their saddles. Thus, each man had six pistols and thirty-six shots. They also carried single-shot carbines slung over their shoulders.

When only fifty guerrillas met a force of four hundred Federal soldiers, they would line up and exchange single shots with their carbines. Federal soldiers did not carry sidearms, and after firing their carbines they had to reload. Once the Federal soldiers began reloading, the guerrillas spurred their horses and, at breakneck speed, rode into the middle of them, drew their pistols, and began killing everyone they saw. When those pistols were empty, they seized two more, and then two more. Each man could fire thirty-six shots.

By that time, most of the soldiers were either dead or had fled two or three miles down the road. General Ewing therefore had a task before him and realized, "How in the world can I contain these men?" They were fierce; they did not give in and did not care whether they lived or died. In just a few minutes, all they were interested in was killing Federal soldiers.

To contain these Confederates, General Ewing began arresting their women—their wives, mothers, and sisters. Initially, he intended to charge them with sheltering Union enemies. During this same period, however, he issued General Orders number 10:

"All persons who shall knowingly harbor, conceal, aid, or abet by furnishing food, clothing, information, protection, or any assistance whatever to any emissary, confederate officer, or soldier, partisan ranger, bushwhacker, robber, thief, shall be promptly executed."

It did not matter whether it was a ten-year-old girl, a twenty-year-old woman, or a sixty-year-old mother. If they gave information or provided food, shelter, or medical supplies, they were to be promptly executed. Ewing then arrested these women

and children, placed them temporarily in Kansas City, and intended to charge them and give them a trial for pro-Confederate activities.

To show you the mentality of the people of Kansas, The Kansas City Daily Journal of Commerce printed an editorial supporting General Ewing's arrest of women and children. The paper said: “It is an utter impossibility to rid the country of these pestilent outlaws, partisan rangers, Confederate soldiers, so long as their families remain. One of the greatest difficulties the military authorities have to encounter is the constant and correct information which the families of the bushwhackers give of every movement the troops make. With the aid of these spies dotted all over the country and living in perfect security, a hundred bushwhackers may defy the utmost efforts of five hundred soldiers to exterminate them.”

The term bushwhacker originally referred to the Jayhawkers and was improperly applied to the guerrilla. A guerrilla was not necessarily a bushwhacker. Their argument was that, with the guerrillas' families supporting them, they could not accomplish anything; therefore, the way to get rid of the guerrillas was simply to get rid of their families.

Harrison Trow said that “a body of federal soldiers, especially enrolled and uniformed to persecute women and prey upon non-combatants gathered up in a half-a-day's raid a number of demonstrative Southern girls whose only sin had been extravagant talk and pro-Confederate cheering. They were taken to Kansas City and imprisoned in a dilapidated tenement close to a steep place on a bank.” Here was a body of soldiers especially enrolled and uniformed to arrest women and children. Some of the women first arrested were imprisoned in the Union Hotel. Many were relatives of Quantrill's men, and after those relatives were gathered there, they were separated from the other women.

Conditions in the Women's Prison and Deliberate Collapse

Among those separated were Charity McCorkle Kerr and Nanny Harris McCorkle. Their husbands were Nathan Kerr and Jabez

McCorkle, who rode with Quantrill. Eighteen-year-old Nanny McCorkle's cousins by marriage were the Younger brothers: Cole, Jim, and Bob Younger, among others.

Captain Henry Fletcher sent fourteen soldiers to arrest the Anderson girls, though there were only three: sixteen-year-old Mary Anderson, her fourteen-year-old sister, Josephine, and her ten-year-old sister, Martha. The Anderson sisters were sisters of Bill Anderson, one of Quantrill's noted lieutenants. Bill Anderson's nickname was “Bloody Bill,” and the reason he acquired it will shortly become clear.

Also arrested were Susan Crawford Vandiver and Arminia Crawford Selvey, names that you will probably hear in a sermon in the future when I preach on the exploits and death of Riley Crawford. A number of other young women were arrested with these ladies.

George Caleb Bingham was also a Union general. He and General Ewing did not get along. Bingham thought Ewing was wicked and arrogant, concerned only with his own interests and political ambitions. Concerning the arrest of these women, General George Caleb Bingham wrote: "These females were arrested and confined under the pretext of holding them as hostages for the good behavior of their brothers, husbands, or relatives who were supposed to be in sympathy with or actually engaged in the Confederate cause."

In other words, General Bingham was saying there was really no lawful or legal reason for these women to be arrested. What they were trying to do was control these men by controlling their women.

At first, these women were imprisoned at the Union Hotel, located at the southeast corner of Sixth and Main Street. Because it was considered too crowded, the women related to Quantrill's men were moved to the old Mechanics Bank building at Delaware and Commercial. It was infested with rats and vermin of all kinds and deemed unfit for human habitation; the women were moved only after the guards complained. Maddy Likens, who was there and described the condition, said: "As a place of imprisonment for such

in this city, an old dilapidated brick building on the levee was taken possession of by the military authorities and set apart as a prison for rebel women. After the building had been occupied as such for some time, it became infested with rats and vermin of all kinds as to render it unfit for human beings to live in.

Even the health of the guards who had access to the river for bathing suffered so much from the stench and torture of the vermin as to lead them to appeal to headquarters for a change of location. So the women who got them to change were the guards. The guards could not take it. They eventually moved these women to a building in the metropolitan block of McGee's addition known as Longhorn Tavern.

Remember General Thomas Ewing, the commander of the District of the Border. He confiscated a building without notifying the owner and made it a women's prison in July of 1863. In fact, he later acknowledged that in a letter. He said, and I am quoting: "This certifies that a certain house in McGee's addition to Kansas City, Missouri, known as Number 13 Metropolitan Block, was occupied as a prison by my order from some day in the latter part of July 1863 until the 13th day of August last when it fell."

Interestingly enough, the building confiscated without notification of the owner was owned by General George Caleb Bingham, the old nemesis of General Ewing. General Bingham opposed General Ewing's infamous Order No. 11. That order demanded that all Southerners either go to a federal outpost or get out of the state, get out of Missouri. Bingham had acquired this building through the estate of Robert Thomas, who had died in 1859. Thomas had been married to the daughter of George Caleb Bingham.

George Caleb Bingham was also a famous artist. He had gone to this building, had it remodeled, and added a third floor at the expense of about $1,800 to use as an art studio. Afterwards, he was selected as treasurer for the state of Missouri and moved from Kansas City to Jefferson City. The building was abandoned, or vacant, for about a year and a half until General Ewing came along and confiscated it without even telling General Bingham that he

was using his building. He just took possession without asking or informing General Bingham.

The women, as you can imagine, were treated quite horribly in their prison. They were kept on the second and third floors of this three-story building under guard. Harrison Trow reports that their food was flung at them at certain intervals, and brutal guards sang rival songs and used indecent language in their presence. You say, "Brother Weaver, I can't imagine someone doing that." Well, it gets a whole lot worse. When you find out what they did, you can certainly understand why they would sing ribald songs and use indecent language to these women.

If you doubt their inhumane and wicked treatment, consider the fact that Charity McCorkle Kerr was ill in bed with a fever because of improper diet and exposure. Others in the building were also not doing well, but they were still trying to minister to those who were sickest. The day before, ten-year-old Martha Anderson had angered the guards, and therefore they chained a twelve-pound ball to her ankle. How dangerous can a ten-year-old girl be? Yet, in retaliation, they chained that ball to her ankle.

It is almost impossible for us who are alive today to conceive of the hatred, ill will, and vindictiveness that the Yankee abolitionists had for the Southern people. I want you to listen to this because I am going to make an application toward the end. The mere fact that women and children were involved did not abate their hatred. Neither did the fact that the women and children were harmless and innocent civilians seem to matter to the soldiers at all. The very fact that they were Southern was sufficient for the soldiers.

The soldiers in the adjoining house, which was used as a guardhouse, examined the structure and saw that it could be very easily destroyed. They then purposefully and deliberately set about weakening the structure and causing it to collapse. They gained access to the Thomas building and removed the brick pillars that held up the first-floor joists. Afterwards, they removed several sleepers, thus weakening the wall. The building began to show signs of collapse.

There were actually three buildings together, and the women and children were kept in the middle building. The soldiers understood that when one went down, it would probably pull at least one more down on top of it. As they weakened it, they knew it was going to fall. The grocers on the first floor of the next building saw dust falling and cracks in the wall. Knowing danger was imminent, they began moving their goods out; they were not going to lose all their merchandise. The women saw the same signs. They, too, said that the building was unsafe and asked to be removed to another building.

Two reports of the building's condition reached General Ewing, and he sent his hand-selected inspectors to inspect it. On two separate occasions, his inspectors returned and said that the building was safe and there was nothing to worry about. Many people believe that General Ewing himself gave the order for the building to be undermined. Later that day, while the women were being given their dinner, Captain Parker requested that Thomas Barber, a soldier in his company, accompany him as they inspected the building.

The soldiers had gotten the building to the point where they knew it would collapse almost instantly. They waited until the guard watching the women had gone for water. They did not know, of course, that Captain Parker and Barber were on the third floor. Thinking the building was nearly vacant, they began their last-ditch effort to cause it to collapse. Captain Parker and Mr. Barber saw the signs and fled the building, hollering to the women that it was going to collapse. Just as the soldiers got out, the building did indeed collapse with the women and children in it.

All but five of the ladies escaped with their lives. They were injured emotionally, mentally, or physically. Those killed instantly were Susan Crawford Vandiver, Arminia Crawford Selvey, Josephine Anderson, and Charity McCorkle Kerr.

Mrs. Wilson was also injured and later died from her injury. The rest of the women were injured. Ten-year-old Martha Anderson could not flee because a twelve-pound ball was chained to her ankle, and she was brutally crushed. She lived, but her legs were mangled beyond all hope, and she sustained a number of other

injuries. Here was a little ten-year-old girl who could not flee because of that twelve-pound ball. Her legs were crushed, and she sustained other injuries. Josephine Anderson, another sister of Bill Anderson, was buried in the ruins.

Aftermath and Blame for the Collapse

For a short time, everyone heard Josephine's screams and cries as she begged anyone to remove the bricks from her head. Then there was silence. Here were five women killed, and all the others horribly injured. The Federals first tried to blame the collapse on the women, saying they had caused it because they were in the basement trying to dig a tunnel and escape. Have you ever wondered how women could dig a tunnel in the basement while under guard on the second and third floors? Someone else said that a windstorm had simply come up and caused the building to collapse.

Since the building was bordered on each side by another building, and since you do not have windstorms in Kansas in August, that certainly is not a plausible explanation. Then someone says the building collapsed due to its age—that it was an old, dilapidated building. The building was actually built in 1857. It was only six years old, and a year and a half earlier it had already been added upon. Shortly after the collapse, several affidavits were taken from numerous persons, all stating that the building was in excellent condition before it was occupied as a United States military prison for females.

General George Caleb Bingham, who owned the building, filed a claim against the government demanding $5,000 for damages that he insisted were caused by the intentional undermining of the building by troops intent on murdering the women. General Bingham blamed General Ewing openly. In an article for the Washington Sentinel, he wrote concerning the collapse:

"The building fell with the force of a mountain avalanche upon the ruins of the adjoining buildings, thus producing a scene of horror in which the death groans and shrieks of mangled women, which fiends could only contemplate without a shudder. In vain had they, upon their first discovery of the danger, begged in

piteous accents to be released. Their earnest appeals were to hearts as callous as that of the general by whose authority they were confined. While their prison walls were trembling, its doors remained closed, and they were allowed no hope for release except through the portals of a horrible death into that eternity where, in the great day which is to right all wrongs, they will stand as witnesses against the human monster who, to promote his selfish aspirations, could cruelly plan, with satanic coolness, the desolation of a large district of country and the utter ruin of its defenseless inhabitants. That the death of these poor women crushed beneath the ruins of their prison was a deliberately planned murder, all the facts connected therewith sufficiently established."

Here is George Caleb Bingham saying General Ewing did it—the soldiers did it. Moreover, federal soldiers happened to be staying at the Duke boarding house, owned by Mrs. B. F. Duke. Mrs. Duke overheard the soldiers talking about their progress undermining the building and saying it would probably fall that day. In a rage, she went to Union headquarters and demanded that the women be released.

Her demands fell on deaf ears, and several hours later the building collapsed. Without the federal soldiers knowing it, Mrs. Duke was a cousin to Bill Anderson. Thus, Bill Anderson received a firsthand account of what happened. Numerous affidavits supported the fact that the building was maliciously and deliberately destroyed. The builders, eyewitnesses, and citizens all testified that the building was in good shape and well built when General Ewing confiscated it. A federal surgeon appeared at the scene of the collapsed building. Someone mentioned, "I wonder how many soldiers are buried under those ruins?" The federal surgeon replied, "None."

They all knew what was going to happen and when it was going to happen, and he was right. Not one federal soldier was found among the ruins. The fact that General Ewing never instituted an inquiry is evidence that the collapse was premeditated and deliberate. No soldier was ever arrested, tried, or punished. The collapse of the building at 1425 Grand, Kansas City, Missouri, on

August 13, 1863, was nothing less than malignant butchery, savagery, and a premeditated war against women and children.

Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence as Retaliation

When news of the collapse reached the families of the dead and injured, what do you suppose their attitude was? They went wild. It is one thing to make war on men; it is another thing to make war on women and children, especially when those women and children are innocent, helpless, and unarmed. At the gravesites of these girls, John McCorkle said, "This foul murder was the direct cause of the famous raid on Lawrence, Kansas." You remember how Quantrill and his men went into Lawrence, Kansas? What is McCorkle saying? This foul murder—the murder of these women and children—was the direct cause of that raid. "We could stand no more. Imagine, if you can, my feelings. A sister, a loved sister, foully murdered, and the wife of a dead brother seriously hurt by a set of men to whom the name assassins, murderers, and cutthroats would be a compliment. People abuse us, but by God, did we not have enough to make us desperate and thirst for revenge? We tried to fight like soldiers, but were declared outlaws, hunted under a black flag, and murdered like beasts."

Our friends' homes burned. Our aged sires who dared sympathize with us had been either hung or shot in the presence of their families; their furniture and provisions were loaded into wagons, and our livestock taken to the state of Kansas. This beautiful farming country of Jackson County, Cass County, and Johnson County was once worse than a desert. On every hillside stood long, blackened chimneys—sad sentinels and monuments to the memory of our once happy homes. These outrages had been done by Kansas troops calling themselves soldiers, but a disgrace to the name of soldier.

Our innocent and beautiful girls had been murdered in the most foul, brutal, savage, and damnable manner. The raid on Lawrence, Kansas, was in direct response to the murder of these Southern women and children. However, unlike the Federals, the Southern men only killed men. Quantrill and his men had a list of nearly 180

men who were to be killed: jayhawkers, soldiers, thieves, and murderers.

They were especially trying to capture Jim Lane, one of the leading jayhawkers. He escaped by running out of his house in his nightshirt and hiding in a cornfield. James C. Edwards wrote a short poem on the Lawrence Raid, revealing the feelings of most of the men: “Men at war never war with women, but women of the South they take to an ancient cell which killed as it fell with the aid of the Union's weight. We're going to ride and track you down. We're going to burn Lawrence to the ground.”

When they arrived at Lawrence to do their killing, Quantrill said, “This is the home of Jim Lane and Jennison. Remember that in hunting us, they gave us no quarter. Shoot every soldier you see, but in no way harm a woman or a child.” Frank Smith later recalled that Quantrill shouted again, “molest no women and children, kill every man in federal uniform.”

That is what they did. Contrary to television's portrayal, they did not shoot women and children; they killed men. Did they burn it? Yes. Why? The battle cry that day was, “remember the women, remember Osceola.” Jim Lane had gone into Osceola, Missouri. Osceola had over 800 buildings, and when he left, only three were standing. He burned them all to the ground.

Galatians 6:7–8 is true in every area and in every respect: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever you sow, that is what you will reap. Sooner or later, we will get back exactly what we dish out. If we dish out rape, murder, pillage, plunder, hatred, and ill will, that is coming back home to us. If we dish out gentleness, charity, graciousness, kindness, and civility, that will come home to us.

Applications for Today

Do you realize that General Thomas Ewing, who had great political aspirations—thankfully ruined by General Bingham—caused the

deaths of countless federal soldiers? After Bill Anderson's sister Josephine was killed and little Martha was crushed and mangled, never to recover, he said he would kill every federal soldier he ever found. The saying was that Quantrill would occasionally spare a prisoner, but Bloody Bill never did. He carried a silk handkerchief, and when he was dead, it had fifty-six knots, representing fifty-six soldiers he had killed.

We do not reap what we sow; we reap more than we sow. You can plant one grain of corn and get a cornstalk with three or four ears. When you act wickedly and do wrong, you never know who will suffer for your wickedness and ungodliness.

Here is a second application. If you find it difficult to believe that the government would commit such a heinous act in 1863, you are certainly not prepared to live in the twenty-first century. A government that considers its citizens expendable and does not seek to protect them will use, abuse, and misuse them in any way it sees fit. It will view them as existing for the benefit of the state, like sheep to be sheared at the whim of the elite. It will not hesitate to use its citizens and soldiers as guinea pigs and cannon fodder. It will act as God, deciding who lives and who dies through wars, famine, abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia.

Thirdly, I believe a parallel now exists between what has just been taught and what is going on today in our world. Think of the New World Order, the One Worlders, and the politically correct crowd. Are we Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-obeying Christians in their good graces? The answer is no. We are considered intolerant, fanatical, uncooperative, right-wingers, and expendable.

Someone may object, "But Brother Weaver, don't you understand that there are a lot of professing Christians even in Washington, D.C.?" Yes, I concur. But there is a big difference between professing and possessing. Fronts, facades, cover, and deception are the rule in politics. To discern who a genuine Christian is in Atlanta or Washington, do not listen to what they say. Watch how they act, how they live, and their legislation. As the old saying goes, "I can't hear what you're saying because of the way that you're acting." I have never ceased to be amazed that so many

could profess to be so Christian and yet pass such ungodly, unbiblical, unconstitutional legislation. It blows my mind. But I have news for you.

Just as surely as the Southerners incurred the hatred of the government in the 1860s, you're going to find that the more and more corrupt government becomes, the more and more we Christians all over will incur the wrath of a corrupt government. Why? Because we want justice, and what is right, holy, and godly, and they don't.

The war against women and children has never stopped; it is still going on today. That's what abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide are. That's what a lot of the vaccination programs are about: sterilization programs. The war still continues. It is still right against wrong, God against Satan, truth against error, and holiness and righteousness against disobedience and rebellion.

Father, we are so thankful for your word and for your truth. Lord, we're so thankful that you have told us that we're to walk differently. We're not to walk the way the other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, but we're to walk biblically, scripturally, and righteously. We pray for your grace, mercy, and help in our lives. Teach us to do thy will. Make us holy. Give us understanding. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 5

The Bible, Women & Prophecy

October 22, 2006

The Bible, Women, and Prophecy

Introduction and Reading of 1 Chronicles 25:1-6

In 1 Chronicles 25, David and the captains of the host separated to the service the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, psalteries, and cymbals, and the number of the workmen according to their service was. Of the sons of Asaph were Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Azarelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hands of Asaph, who prophesied according to the order of the king. Of Jeduthun were Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six under the hands of their father, Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the Lord.

Of Heman were Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romamti-ezer. Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth completed the list. All these were the sons of Heman, the king's seer, in the words

of God to lift up the horn. God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters, and these went into the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

The Question of Women Preachers and Prophesying

The message today is entitled, The Bible, Women, and Prophecy. I am going to answer a question that has been asked me repeatedly down through the years, concerning women and prophesying. Years ago, Armenian evangelist John R. Rice wrote a booklet entitled Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives, and Women Preachers. He took all three to task and showed how each one was unbiblical.

I remember being in a meeting years ago, some of you may have been there, where they were recognizing the pastors because there was a pastors conference. About fifty or sixty pastors stood up and introduced themselves. Then one woman stood up and gave her name and her position. The man who had asked the pastors to stand was something of an assistant at the church. When the pastor found out what had happened, he came out and said, “We want all the pastors to stand up and reintroduce themselves”—that is, all the men pastors. He said, “We don't recognize women preachers in this church. And the reason we don't is God does it.” Then he did it all over again.

There has been an upsurge in women preachers in this age, and they seem to be everywhere, whether one goes into the North or the South. Usually, it is the more liberal denominations that ordain women, such as the United Presbyterians or the United Methodists. But there have also been some Southern Baptist churches. I even saw a woman priest on the news. What in the world is happening?

When women preaching is mentioned, someone automatically asks, “What’s wrong with women preachers? Are you a woman hater, or are you simply a male chauvinistic pig?” My answer is that I do not suppose there is anything wrong with women preachers unless you believe the Bible. If you believe the Bible, women preachers are not going to fare very well. Once you enter

into the Word of God, you find limitations placed upon the ministry.

But in order to ordain women, one must be ready to deny, disregard, and dishonor the Word of God.

When this issue was boiling in the Southern Baptist Convention, and some hesitated to ordain women into the ministry, past President Jimmy Carter severed his relationship with the Convention over the issue. He flatly said that the Apostle Paul was wrong, and that Paul was a woman-hater and a chauvinist. So much for Jimmy Carter's faith. Whatever he had, it certainly was not a biblical faith. Clearly, if one part of the Bible is wrong, it casts doubt upon the rest of the Bible.

I want to endeavor to answer some tough questions biblically. For the record, I am not a woman hater. My mother is a woman, my mother-in-law is a woman, my wife is a woman, my four daughters are women, my horse was a mare, and my dog is a female. If I hated women, I would be in a pickle, wouldn't I? I have been surrounded by women all my life.

One does not hate simply because he tells the truth. So let us ask: Are women preachers biblical? Is it possible for a woman to prophesy? What is prophesying? Is there a difference between preaching and prophesying? And is there a difference between one's standing before Christ and the position God has put one in in this world?

Four Ways Men and Women Are Equal

Four Ways Women Are Equal to Men

Let me begin with four ways in which women are equal to men. I am beginning with a positive. Here are four ways women are equal to men.

First, men and women are equally the creation of God. God created both sexes, and each of us can glory in the fact that God made us. I am thankful that God made women, and women ought to be thankful that God made men. Some of them are, and some of

them are not. But the fact is, we are equal in creation because we are equally God's creatures.

Secondly, men and women are equal in depravity. Both fell, both sinned, and both are equally depraved. Women are just as sinful as men, and men are just as sinful as women. The truth is, the Bible teaches that it was the woman who sinned first. She took the fruit, then gave it to her husband, and he ate. First Timothy 2:14 says, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Women, then, are equally depraved, just like men.

So how are men and women equal? We are equal in the fact that we are God's creation, and we are equal in the fact that we are both depraved.

Thirdly, men and women are equal in God's redemptive plan. Both men and women may be convicted, regenerated, converted, and saved. The Word of God abounds with illustrations of godly women, just as it abounds with illustrations of godly men. The Bible says in Jonah 2:9, "Salvation is of the LORD." Certainly, God in His sovereign grace and mercy may save whomever He chooses to save, either man or woman.

Fourth, men and women are equal in their standing before God. Romans 5:1–2 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Women who are saved have equal standing before God, just like men who are saved. Women who are saved may come to the Father through Jesus Christ in the power and person of the Holy Spirit, just as men can. Women may pray, intercede, and come to the Father exactly the way men do. God will hear the prayers of a woman just as quickly as He will hear the prayers of a man. How, then, are men and women equal? We are equal in creation, equal in depravity, equal in the redemptive process, and equal in our standing before God. But that does not mean that men and women have the same position.

God's Positional Order: God, Christ, Man, Woman

God has a positional order that He has ordained, and that order is based upon His absolute sovereignty. There is a reason for that order. First Corinthians 11:3 says, “But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” This verse shows us God's sovereign positional order. It is God the Father first, God the Son second, then man, and then woman.

Picture, in mid-air, a little chart: God, Christ, man, woman. Isn't that what the verse says—that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God? Thus, you have God's positional order. You may not like that positional order, but that is the way God ordained it, and there is a reason for His ordination.

First Timothy 2:14 says, “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” We remember the passage back in Genesis where the woman took of the fruit and ate, and then gave it to her husband. So let us ask the question: Who was the first person to sin? The answer is Eve. The Bible says very plainly, “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” We know that she took the fruit and did eat, as the Bible tells us.

Look in your Bibles to Romans chapter 5 and verse 12. We know that the first person to sin was a woman, or the woman at that time. Romans 5:12 says, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered in the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Let me ask you a question: If a woman was the first one to sin, why does the Bible say, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world”? And if you skip down to verse 14, it says, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.” Why did it not say, “even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Eve's transgression”? In other words, the woman was the first one to sin, man was the second to sin, and yet the fall and its effects are ascribed to the man.

Why does the Bible not speak of Eve's transgression? Because God had constituted Adam as not only the head of the race, but the head of his home and the head of his family, and everything stood or fell in Adam. In Genesis 2:15-17, God created Adam first and entered into a covenant with Adam. After that, God made Eve and brought her to Adam. Adam was the constituted head. Consequently, it was not what Eve did that counted, but rather what Adam did, because God had ordained Adam as the head of the race, the head of the home, and the head of the family. What Adam did, we did.

Now let us go back in our Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Let me show you how this works out. You remember verse 3, where I gave you God's positional order: “But I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” There is a reason for that order. Without getting into a controversy or preaching another message, the Bible here is talking about head coverings. Look at verse 7: “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God.” But the woman is the glory of the man. “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.”

Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power over her head because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.

After giving this created order—God, Christ, man, woman—he explains why man should never cover his head when speaking in church or religiously: man is made in the glory of God. But the woman is made in the glory of the man. Do you see the positional order? Adam was created first, in the glory of God. When God made the woman, He took the rib out of Adam and made the woman. Therefore, the woman was made in the glory of man.

Now, there is a positional difference. Listen to what I am saying. I am not saying that women are below a man, or men, or beneath men, in the creation order, in depravity, in redemptive plan, or in

the standing before God. I'm not saying that. All I am saying is that there is a difference positionally.

Let me explain it further. Is Jesus Christ God? Well, of course He is. But do you know what Jesus Christ did? He laid aside His royal majesty and glory, became a man, was found in the fashion of a man, became a servant, and became obedient unto death.

And while He was in this life, what did He say? "I came to do the will of My Father." As the Father's servant, Jesus Christ could truthfully say, "My Father is greater than I." How could He say that? Because the Father had sent Him, and He came positionally to be the Father's servant. But Jesus Christ could also say in John 10, "I and my Father are one."

He is still very God of very God. But as He came as the Savior, as He came as the God-man, He came as a servant. So, positionally speaking, He was different: God, but He came in a submissive role to God the Father.

Now, let me try to explain this passage like this. Since God has given us the creative order, there is a boast, if you please, or a glory for the man, and there is a humility for the man. There is also a boast or a glory for the woman and a humility for the woman.

Here is the man's boast, his glory: The man can truthfully say, "I was not made for the woman. The woman was made for me." Isn't that wonderful? Just stop and think about that. I was not made for my wife; my wife was made for me. That's my glory. But here is my humility: I'm incomplete without her. She's the only one who can complete me, and without woman, the race ceases.

Now, here is the woman's humility. The woman could say, "The man was not made for me. I was made for him, and I was made in his image." But here is her glory: I'm the only one who can complete him. I'm the only one who can satisfy him. And without him, the race ends—or without me, the race ends.

I am absolutely needed and necessary. Now, that is what he is saying. God says, “Here is my order: God, Christ, man, woman.” God has placed us positionally in different realms or different areas. There is a reason for this positional order. Men and women

may be equal in many ways, but in different ways, or in other ways, they are positionally different.

Was it a disgrace and dishonor and a humiliation for Jesus Christ to be in submission to His Father? No. Is it a disgrace and dishonor for the man to be in submission to Christ? No. Is it a disgrace and dishonor for the woman to be in submission to man? No. That is simply the way God made things. It was the positional order He ordained, and it is based upon God's sovereign order.

The Prohibition Against Women Teaching Men

With this understanding in mind—God, Christ, man, woman—Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:11–12, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

If you want to know the theme of 1 Timothy before explaining verses 11 and 12, look at 1 Timothy 3:15. Paul says, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." If Paul did not get there on time, he was writing this in advance so that they would know how to behave themselves in the house of God. Why did Paul write 1 Timothy? He wanted people to know how they should act in the house of God. Isn't that amazing?

Then he returns to the command in chapter 2: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Paul makes it very clear that women are therefore not to teach or usurp authority over the man. Certainly, women may teach women, and women may teach children, but the Word of God forbids a woman to teach men. Why?

Look at it in the context. Verse 11 of 1 Timothy 2 says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection, but I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Why? Here is why. Verse 13 says, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." There is the creative order. Secondly, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the

transgression." In other words, there is the fact that the woman was deceived and in the transgression. There are the two reasons why God says the woman should not teach nor usurp authority. They are listed very plainly.

Now, let me give you an illustration of this. Hold 1 Timothy, but look in your Bibles at Acts chapter 16. You remember how Paul went to the women's prayer meeting. This is where Lydia was converted. Acts chapter 16 and verse 13 says, "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul."

Now, notice verse 13: "And on the sabbath, we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down and spake unto" whom? Who did we speak to? The women. Who was at this prayer meeting? Primarily women. Women were probably in charge of the prayer meeting. But when Paul and his company got there, who took charge? Paul did. The women submitted to the teaching and preaching while Paul was there. When Paul was not there, and no man was there, probably a woman led. But when the men came, the women handed over the position to the man.

Now, go back in your Bibles, if you would please, to 1 Timothy chapter 2. Let me remind you of the theme of 1 Timothy. Do you remember 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 15? "That if I tarry long, thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God." Paul is laying out what we should do in the house of God. So look at verse 8 of 1 Timothy chapter 2.

Qualifications for Pastors and the Role of Men in Prayer

Here is God's will for men: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands without wrath and without doubting." Notice that He says, "I will therefore that men pray every where." Why is it that I never call on a woman to lead in prayer? Because

God says it is His will that men lead in prayer in the church. If you want to look in the Greek, you will find that the word men is anēr, which means a man and a man only. It is used in the Bible to distinguish men from women and men from boys. Thus God is saying that in the church it is His will that men, and men only, lift up holy hands without wrath and without doubting.

Does that mean women cannot pray silently? Of course not. Women may pray, but when it comes to leading the congregation in prayer openly, publicly, and vocally, it is the men who do the praying.

Now, what is God's will for women? Look in verse 9: “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broided hair or gold or pearls or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness with good works, let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.” God's will for women in church is that they come modestly attired, live holy lives, and do not depend on garments or jewelry, but on that which becometh women professing godliness with good works, and that they learn in silence with all subjection. This is how we know how to behave ourselves in the church.

You cannot show me one woman pastor or one woman preacher in the New Testament. You may say that Acts 21:9 tells us Philip had four daughters who prophesied. I will deal with that in just a moment. But turn to 1 Timothy chapter 3 and look at the qualifications for a pastor, a preacher. Verse 1 says, “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” Verse 2 says, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach.”

If you compare 1 Timothy 3:1-2 with Titus 1:7, where you again have the qualification for an elder, you will be amazed when you study the Greek. You will find that the word man is anēr, which means a man and a man only. It is the word used to distinguish men from women. If Paul meant humankind or mankind in general, he would have used anthrōpoi, which includes men and women. Instead, he uses anēr, meaning a man and a man only.

Moreover, according to verse 2, I have never found a woman who could be the husband of one wife. Look in verse 4: “If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?” Who has God constituted as the head of the home? The man. Again, verse 4 says, “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.” God is saying that the man has to be the head of his house and have his children in subjection. If he cannot take care of his own house, how can he take care of the church of God?

How can a woman be the head of a house when God never constituted her as the head of a home? How can a woman be the husband of one wife? How can a woman be a man? Obviously, she cannot. If she cannot be the head of her home, cannot be the husband of one wife, must remain silent in the church, and is not allowed to usurp authority or teach men, how can she be a pastor? How can she be a preacher? How can she prophesy?

One objects, “But wait a minute, preacher. I know there were some women used of God in the Old and New Testaments.” Let me make this clear: I am not saying that God cannot use women. God does use women. I can show you a multitude of passages. He just does not use them to preach, and He just does not use them to teach.

You may say, “I know some. I heard one on the radio this week. I know one lady in our county who pastors two churches.” My wife and I were traveling home late one night, and I turned on some preaching on the radio. This man was giving it out; he was preaching.

I only got the last five minutes of the program or so. When the program ended, the preacher said, “Now we'll have a message in song from our dear husband.” It was a woman. I couldn't even tell it was a woman. She sounded just like a man. I said, “Whoa, you may be your dear husband, but he's not mine.” I knew one church in South Georgia where the woman was the pastor and her husband was the janitor of the church.

Look in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 3. Let me just show you a general principle. Notice, if you would please, verse 12. God says,

"As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee, that is the women, cause thee to err and destroy the way of thy paths." Do you realize that women in authority and women in positions of authority, biblically speaking, are the curse of God? It shows that we are under the judgment of God. I don't see how this could be any plainer. I tell you what, I don't see any plainer.

Old Testament Prophetesses: Deborah, Huldah, and Miriam

You say, "But Brother Weaver, how do you explain women like Deborah and Huldah?" I suppose those are the two best-known women in the Old Testament. Those who want to say that women can preach use these two women mainly as their support system. But let us consider Deborah first.

Judges 4:4 says, "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time." One thing is sure: you cannot get around this verse. The Bible says that Deborah was a prophetess, that she was the wife of Lapidoth, and that she judged Israel at that time.

What was that time when she was judging Israel? It was the time of the judges. Do you remember the theme of the book of Judges? You will find it in Judges 17:6 and 21:25: "But there was no king in Israel in those days. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It was a time of rebellion—a time of rebellion against God and God's orderly ways.

Moreover, if you take the phrase "at that time" in its context, it refers to the last few days or months during the twenty years of oppression under Jabin. Here was Deborah, called a prophetess in the time of the Judges, a time of rebellion. In the last few months under Jabin's oppression, she was the one who judged Israel. Nothing evil at all is said concerning Deborah in the Bible. Evidently, she knew the law of God, and she was used by God when there were no men willing to assume the office of judge.

You have to think about something else. Jabin was a horrible oppressor. What would have happened during this time of

rebellion if a man had assumed such an office? Probably Jabin would have had him killed. Jabin probably had no fear of a woman at all; he did not view her as a threat. But although Deborah may have been a woman of imminent holiness and practical ability, there is nothing in the Bible, nothing in the book of Judges, that ascribes to her miraculous actions or prophetic orations.

You say, "But Brother Weaver, she foresaw and foretold the victory that God would give to Barak." Yes, she did. But you also have to understand that in 2 Kings 2, the sons of the prophets foresaw and foretold that Elijah would be taken from Elisha, and yet no miraculous things were attributed to them. Do you realize that any man or any woman with discernment and willing to look at things can discern the tides relatively easy?

The one thing Deborah had going for her was this: when she called Barak and said, "God's going to give Jabin into your hands. You go and smite him," Barak said, "I'll not go unless you go with me." Remember, it was a time of rebellion. What did Deborah try to do? She tried to elevate Barak, to make sure the man had the position of authority and received the glory. Deborah said, "All right, I'll go with you, but I want to tell you something. Because of this thing, the glory is going to go to a woman and not a man." Hence, most people remember Jael rather than Barak. It was Jael who took the hammer and the nail and drove it through Sisera's temple.

Here is Deborah, who was a judge. She tried to elevate the man, and the man would not have it. Yet in Judges chapter 4 and verse 4, she is called a prophetess. The Hebrew word is a very unusual word: Nebiyah, which is translated prophetess, but actually means an ancient type endowed with the gift of song or the wife of a prophet. What do you have in Judges chapter 5? The song of Deborah. I believe Deborah and Huldah fit into the same category. Deborah was in a time of rebellion, when no man was willing to assume the position of authority. You have the same thing in the time of Huldah. Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 22.

Notice verses 12 and 13. This was during the reign of Josiah. The king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah, a

servant of the king, saying, “Go ye and inquire of the Lord from me, and from the people, and from all Judah concerning the words of this book that is found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened in the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.” So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asahiah went into the home of Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She dwelt in Jerusalem in the college, and they communed with her.

This was the time when the law of God had been lost. It was found in the temple, read to Josiah, and Josiah repented.

Notice something else. King Josiah did not send these men to Huldah. He said, “Go ye and inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah concerning the words of this book.” It was the priest, the scribe, and the other men who went to Huldah on their own.

Now you have to ask yourself: Why did they go to Huldah? You could say she was the closest one there. That is possibly a good answer. You could say the king’s demand required haste. That is possibly a good answer. But Jeremiah prophesied during the reign of Josiah. Why did they not go to Jeremiah? Perhaps Jeremiah was in another part of the kingdom. Zephaniah also prophesied during Josiah’s reign. Why did they not go to Zephaniah? Perhaps he had not yet begun his ministry. That is another possibility.

Hilkiah was the high priest. Please remember this: Hilkiah, the high priest, was ignorant of God's law. Malachi 2:7 says, “For the priest lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.” Who had the primary responsibility to know the law? The high priest. Yet the high priest did not even know the law.

With him was Shaphan, a scribe. Shaphan was totally ignorant of the law. Compare Ezra with Shaphan. Ezra 7:6 says, “This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given.” Ezra was a ready scribe. He knew the law; he had it down past.

Here was Hilkiah, the high priest, who was totally ignorant of God's law, though God said he was the one who should have known it. Here was Shaphan, a scribe, who should have known, but did not. King Josiah at this time was twenty-six years of age. According to Deuteronomy 17, King Josiah should have had his own written copy of the law of God, which he read day and night. Hilkiah was ignorant, Shaphan was ignorant, and the king was ignorant. The secret of the Lord was not with Hilkiah the high priest, Shaphan the scribe, the king, any of the king's servants, or any of the ministers of the temple.

Yet Huldah, a prophetess of whom we know absolutely nothing apart from this circumstance, was the one who told them what God's Word said. Tradition says that she prophesied among the women, the court ladies, being one of them herself.

How in the world can we explain this? The only way I can explain it is this: God never leaves Himself without excuse or without a witness. Why? Because He will never leave sinners without excuse. When those who should know, those who should rule, and those who should exercise dominion refuse to do so, power always shifts to those who will. Do you know why we basically have a matriarchal society in America?

Because the men have abdicated their position as head of the home. You know why we have a matriarchal society in the church? Because the men are too sorry, and the women will. The women will work; the men won't. Do you realize power does not go away just because you do not exercise it? If the husband will not be the head of his house, the wife will. If a wife will not be the head of that house, the children will. Somebody will rule that house.

And here you have Deborah and Huldah, both in times of ignorance and rebellion to God, being used by God, because God is not going to leave Himself without witness. I am thankful for every godly, holy, knowledgeable woman. But the shame is, most of the women who are knowledgeable, holy, and godly got that way apart from their husbands and not because of them. Deborah and Huldah are the only two exceptions. You have to understand the times in which they judged or prophesied. When the Bible calls Huldah a prophetess, it is the same word that is used of Deborah.

Someone who does music with song, just like Miriam—if you will look in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 15, verse 1: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: his horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Then sang Moses and the children of Israel. Now skip down to verses 20 and 21: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, singing unto the Lord, for he had triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider had been thrown into the sea."

What was Miriam doing? Singing, playing music, and yet she is called a prophetess.

When we think of a prophet, we normally think of someone who is supernaturally endowed with a gift of foreknowing and foretelling. Let me tell you what a prophet does in the Bible—Old Testament, New Testament, it does not matter. A prophet is someone who foreknows because God has supernaturally given him truth that has usually never been revealed before. He not only foreknows what is going to happen, but then, secondly, he foretells what is going to happen.

You do not find this either in Miriam, Huldah, or Deborah. You do not find this in any of these women as you would find it in Elijah, Elisha, and a multitude of the other prophets. We have forgotten that the word prophecy, or to prophesy, can also relate to something other than preaching and teaching.

Prophesying with Music in 1 Chronicles 25

Go back to 1 Chronicles 25 and notice verse 1. Here we are. I am going to show you how these women prophesied, but they never preached. "Moreover, David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals, and the number of the workmen according to their service was." Notice the phrase, "who should prophesy with harps, psalteries, and cymbals." Were these men preaching? No. What

were they doing? They were playing instruments, and yet the Bible calls it prophesying with these instruments.

In other words, the word prophesy does not necessarily mean to preach. It does not mean to be endowed with the gift of foreknowing and foretelling. Look at verse 2: "of the sons of Asaph, under the hands of Asaph, who prophesied according to the order of the king."

It was not God who was commanding them to prophesy; it was the king. So this is not what you and I would call a supernatural prophecy. What were they doing? They were singing and playing musical instruments. Look at verse 3, the latter part: "Who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the Lord." Who prophesied with a harp? What were they doing with a harp, standing up there letting the harp preach? No. They were playing music among the harp, and it is called prophesying with a harp. They were thanking and praising the Lord with their music.

Look at verse 5: "All these were the sons of Heman, the king's heirs, in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters." Here are men praising God with the horns, the bugle, the trumpet, the cornet, whatever they had. And God gave Heman fourteen sons—and what did He give him?

Fourteen sons and what? Three daughters. First Chronicles 25 says that God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. All these—the daughters as well as the sons—were under the hands of their father. They were instructed for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

The number of them with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all who were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight, which included the women. Second Samuel 19:35 speaks of singing men and singing women. In Second Chronicles 35:25, Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and singing women spoke of Josiah in their lamentations of that day and made them an ordinance in Israel;

behold, they are written in the lamentations. Here again are singing men and singing women.

Ezra chapter 2, verse 65, speaks of those who came back from Babylon: besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were 7,337, there were among them 200 singing men and singing women. When you get to Nehemiah 7:67, once again it talks about singing men and singing women.

Were these women prophesying? Yes. How were they prophesying? By playing musical instruments and by singing, because you can prophesy with music. They were playing these instruments, and they were singing unto the Lord.

How can playing musical instruments and singing be called prophesying? What was the only hymn book that existed in the Old Testament and in New Testament time? The book of Psalms. What is Psalm 16? What is Psalm 22? Prophecy. In other words, these people were playing and singing the Psalms; they were playing and singing Scripture. Thus they were prophesying.

If you understand this, then you can understand Acts 21:9, where Philip had four daughters who prophesied. They were not preaching. They were singing and playing musical instruments. They were like Miriam and like Deborah, whose song we have in Judges chapter 5.

Why does the Word of God command and teach that women are not to be pastors and preachers? The answer is given to us in the Bible: first, because of the creative order. Man was created first and the woman second.

The Redemptive Picture in Ephesians 5

Secondly, it is because of the woman's liability in the fall, as stated in 1 Timothy 2:14. Thirdly, it is because of the redemptive picture. In Ephesians 5:22, the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave

Himself for it." When he talks about husband and wife, verse 32 says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

He is using the husband-and-wife relationship to picture a redemptive truth. Christ is the head of the man, and Christ loved the church and gave His life for the church. Therefore, the church, who is the bride, is to be in submission to Christ. Just as the man is the head of the house, the wife, to picture the church's submission, is to be in submission to the man. The woman pictures the church in her submission; the man is to picture Christ in his love and sacrifice for his wife.

Women who usurp the role and position of man reverse this redemptive picture and portray the church as head of and superior to Christ. They make Christ submissive to the church. When women assume a pastoral office, the creative order is wrong, the liability of the thought is wrong, and the redemptive picture is wrong. I will exercise this authority.

Do you realize that women who preach destroy the redemptive picture God gives us in Ephesians 5? Can women pray? Of course. May they sing? Yes. May they worship? Yes. But are they to lead and have an office of authority in the church? No. Not because they are defective, beneath man, or some kind of little subordinate creature, but because God has ordained positional differences, and He has ordained those differences to reflect biblical truth.

Conclusion: Striving Lawfully According to Scripture

We are either in submission to Christ, or we are not. I have heard people say, “But, Brother Weaver, those women who are preaching are at least trying to do some good.” You do not need to focus on what they are trying to do; you need to focus on what the Word of God says.

You know what the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:5? “And if a man also strives for masteries, yet he’s not crowned except he strives lawfully.” What does that mean? If I want to be crowned, honored by God, or do good, I have to play according to the rules God laid

down in His Word. If I violate those rules, I am not doing good; I am in rebellion. It is not a question of whether someone is trying to do good, whether their motives are right, or whether they are sincere. The question is: Is it biblical? Is it biblical?

Years ago, I ran into a woman who was supposed to be a prophetess. I was set up, I will tell you that. I would never have been there had I known, but some friends set me up. I tried, to the best of my ability, to explain to this woman everything I have explained to you today. Finally, it got to be eleven o'clock at night.

I said, "I'm not getting anywhere with you. I'm tired. I'm going home, going to bed, and going to sleep." She said to me, "Resist sleep, and it will flee from you." I said, "Ma'am, I don't want to resist sleep. God made my body so that it needs rest, and I'm going to get the rest I need. By the way, it's eleven o'clock."

I asked her, "Does your husband know where you are?" "Well, of course not." I said, "You are in rebellion to God and in rebellion to your husband. If my wife were away somewhere at eleven o'clock at night and I did not know where she was, I would find out. You are wicked and wrong, and you might as well repent now, because God will judge you for what you do."

It is not whether they are genuine, sincere, or trying to do good. It is whether it is biblical. That is what counts.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask Your blessing and Your help. Teach us, build us up in the most holy faith, and give us grace to serve Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 6

4 Sanctification & Sexual Purity

October 22, 2007

Review of Previous Messages

Paul writes, “Furthermore then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as you have received of us, how you ought to walk and to please God, so that you would abound more and more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles who knew not God. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given us his Holy Spirit.”

The general theme is sanctification and sexual purity. In verse 1 there is an exhortation. First, there is a practical necessity: “For you have received of us how you ought to walk and to please God.” The practical necessity is that we must be taught. Secondly, there is a personal application, because he says how you ought to walk and to please God. While any preacher may teach you the Word of God, he cannot personally apply the Word of God for you. You must do that.

Thirdly, there is in verse 1 a progressive reality: “So you would abound more and more.” There is to be no regression and no neutrality. We are to be going from faith to faith and from glory to glory. In verse 2 is the explanation: “For you know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.” This is how they knew how they were to walk and to please God: by following the commandments, by following the teaching of the Word of God.

In verse 3 is the exposition: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication.” Under verse 3, first of all, there is an affirmation: This is the will of God.

This phrase is used numerous times in Scripture. There are several specific areas that are very plain. For instance, in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, he says, "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." There are areas in which we may not be fully aware of exactly what the will of God is, but there are also areas that are very specific. First Thessalonians 4:3 is one of those: "For this is the will of God."

So you have an affirmation. Secondly, in verse 3, you have an explanation: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." Last week I told you what sanctification consists of. First of all, it means holy; it means worthy of veneration; it means to be set apart exclusively for the use of God; it means to be prepared for God. Fourthly, it means to be holy, upright, pure, and sinless. So he says very plainly in verse 3, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification."

Introduction to the Negation: Abstain from Fornication

Now we come to this last phrase in verse 3. Here is a negation: "That you abstain from fornication." In other words, abstaining from fornication is part and parcel of our sanctification. After he tells us what we are to be—that is, sanctified—he tells us one area from which we are to abstain or stay away if we are going to be sanctified, and that is fornication. Before anyone can abstain from fornication, however, he must know exactly what fornication is.

What is fornication? Consider that question in your own mind. What do you actually think fornication is? Let me give you several general answers that I have heard all my life, and which, I might add, are both untrue. The first goes something like this: adultery is between married people, and fornication is between unmarried people. Or someone may say that fornication is sexual impurity before marriage, while adultery is sexual impurity after marriage. Thus they try to give a very general definition. But fornication is a term far broader than adultery. It includes adultery, but it is far broader than simply adultery. Fornication and adultery are not synonymous terms.

Fornication is Not Synonymous with Adultery

They do not mean exactly the same thing. The Greek word for fornication is porneia. It is where we get our English word pornography. Porneia is the word fornication, and graphe is the Greek word “I write” or “I draw.” So pornography, basically speaking, is fornication writing or fornication drawing. The word for adultery is moicheia. Thus, you have two totally different words: adultery, moicheia, and fornication, porneia.

In Matthew 19:9, our Lord said, “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery. Whosoever shall marry another, who is put away, doth commit adultery.” He is not saying that fornication and adultery are the same. He said, “...whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery.” So fornication and adultery are not synonymous. In Matthew 5:32, he says, “...but I say to you that

whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery. And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery."

The Breadth of Fornication in Scripture

Once again, it should be very clear that fornication and adultery are two totally different things. It is not said that fornication is adultery. It is said that marrying a woman divorced for grounds other than fornication is adultery. The message I am going to teach today is not intended to be a dissertation on marriage and divorce. That is not the intent of this message at all. The intent is to show you what fornication actually is.

Now, when someone comes along and says then, well, adultery and fornication are exactly the same, then what they are doing is confusing the words of our Lord in Matthew chapter 19 and Matthew chapter 5, and they are actually confounding two things that are absolutely totally different. Now, let me just try to explain before we get into some scriptures today what I'm talking about. Let's say that here is a married woman and she is unfaithful to her husband with another man. Everyone says, well, that's adultery. We recognize that as adultery. It is sexual impurity. Well, let me ask you a question. Suppose this woman is unfaithful to her husband with her own son or with her nephew. What is it then? It's more than adultery. It's adultery, but now it's incest. Let's suppose this woman is unfaithful to her husband, not with another man, but with another woman. Now, you see, it's sick, it's sin, but you see what I'm saying. So there has to be a word that is broader than just simply the word adultery.

In other words, every act of sexual intercourse by a woman with a man other than her husband is indeed adultery. But there are instances and situations that go far beyond that.

Now, I want you to understand that Scripture always uses words purposefully and deliberately. For instance, look in your Bibles to the book of Galatians chapter 3. The book of Galatians chapter 3. And note, if you would please, verse 16, I believe it is. Galatians 3. Yes, verse 16. Now I want you to note how careful scripture is with words. In Galatians 3 verse 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed,

singular, were the promises made. He saith not unto seeds as of many, but as of one, and of thy seed which is Christ." So Paul is emphasizing that the Scripture says the promises were made to Abraham's seed. Well, who is that seed? Well, look in verse 29. He said, "If ye then be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So the seed that the promises were made to was none other than Jesus Christ. It was not necessarily made to all of his physical descendants. It was made to Jesus Christ, who is the true seed of Abraham. Now, if you look at your Bibles very quickly to Matthew chapter 22.

Matthew chapter 22. And let me show you how precise Scripture is. Matthew chapter 22. And let's begin reading there with verse 23. Matthew 22, verse 23. "The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said if a man die having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed unto his brother." This was the Levirate marriage.

“Now there was with us seven brethren. And the first, when he had married a wife, deceased and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother. Likewise, the second also, and the third unto the seventh. And last of all, the woman died also.” By the way, if I had been that fifth, sixth, or seventh brother, I do not think I would have been interested in marrying that woman. Everybody married her or died. So they said, “Seven husbands had her, and last of all she died.” Verse 28: “Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her?”

They thought they had Him tricked. “Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

What is our Lord doing? He is here teaching a doctrine based upon the tense of a verb: “I am the God,” not “I was.” These people are not now dead. No, “I am.” They are alive. That is how precise

Scripture is. Christ is teaching the doctrine of the bodily resurrection and of the resurrection of the dead based upon the tense of a verb.

When Scripture mentions the word fornication and mentions the word adultery, if Christ had meant that they were one and the same, He could have used the same word twice. But very clearly, He did not. I want us to examine the Scriptures and show the breadth of the word fornication. By the time we get through, you will know whether the answer you gave yourself in your mind is scriptural or not. Let us look in our Bibles at Matthew 15 and verse 19.

You will also find this same passage in Mark 7. Christ gives a parable and explains it to His disciples: "Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out in the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

When someone says that adultery and fornication are the same, our Lord's words show otherwise. He distinguishes between them: out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and fornications. There is something totally different because He distinguishes between them.

The word fornication, in a very broad sense, refers to all illicit intercourse—generally speaking, all unlawful, unbiblical, illegal, ungodly, and lewd conduct. Sometimes the word is even used to refer to whoredom. Let me show you. First, we will begin with the general use. Turn to the book of Romans, chapter 1, verse 29. Here the term is used very generally. Notice verse 29. He says, "being filled"—but let us read verse 28 so that you can get the context: "and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which were not convenient."

In Romans chapter 1, Paul says, "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy and murder, debate, deceit, malignity,

whisperers," and he goes on. But he does not mention adultery. Why? Because the word fornication is very broad, referring to sexual sins in general. He does not necessarily mention what you and I would refer to as sodomy, except perhaps in verse 31, "without natural affection"; but that could also refer to attitudes toward parents. The point is that fornication is a general term referring to lewdness in morality, in a very real and broad sense.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, fornication is used specifically for a relationship with a prostitute. "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!"

He is talking about a relationship with a harlot or prostitute: "What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication!" Every sin that a man doeth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. He goes on to say that our body is the temple of God. Here, then, fornication refers specifically to a relationship with a prostitute or harlot, although in Romans chapter 1 it referred to illicit sexual relationships in general.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul writes, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman." Does that mean I cannot shake Janet's hand or put my arm around Susie's shoulder? No. He is talking about touching someone with sexual intent, lust, or some bad, wicked motive.

In 1 Corinthians 7:2, Paul says, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." God's provision for avoiding all immorality is that each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

In verse 3 he says, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence. And likewise also the wife unto the husband." He is

talking about physical relations: the wife is to take care of the husband, and the husband is to take care of the wife. “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband. And likewise, also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife.”

Then he says, “Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” The ideal is that every man have his own wife and every woman have her own husband. When there is abstinence in the marriage, it has to be with consent. Usually, the only lawful reason, outside of physical conditions, is that they give themselves to fasting and prayer. Paul says not to make that separation too long, lest Satan tempt them for their incontinency.

Here the term fornication is used in 1 Corinthians 7 to describe what marriage avoids. In 2 Corinthians 12:21, fornication is associated with, but distinct from, uncleanness and lasciviousness: “...lest when I come again my God will humble me among you, and then I shall bewail many who have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.” It is associated with those sins, but it is distinct from them.

In Galatians 5:19, Paul says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness.” Thus fornication is distinct from adultery, uncleanness, and lasciviousness, although adultery, uncleanness, and lasciviousness can fit under fornication while still being mentioned distinctly. Verse 21 adds, “...envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like, of the which I tell you and have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” These are all works of the flesh mentioned in this passage.

Now look in the book of Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5, just running down the list. Here in Ephesians 5, here is fornication which is not to be once named among the saints. He says, "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh saints."

Now remember the word saint means to be holy. It means to be set apart exclusively for the use of God. The word saint, by the way, I hope you realize that you don't become saints when you die. According to some folks, you might become a haint, but you don't become a saint. No, you don't become a haint either.

Now, that's a term for a ghost or a spirit. But saints are living people. Paul wrote to the saints that are at Rome, to the saints that are at Ephesus, to the saints that are in Galatia, you see. So, he says, that must not be once named among the saints. Look in the book of Colossians, chapter 3, and verse 5.

Here's one of the things that is to be mortified. He says, the book of Colossians, chapter 3 it should be, chapter 3, not 4, but chapter 3. He says, "Mortify," by the way that's where we get the word mortician from, "mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry." So here is something that is to be mortified or to be put to death. Now look in your Bibles to the book of Revelation chapter 9.

We're going to come back to 1 Thessalonians in a little bit. But look in Revelation chapter 9 verse 21. Here are the unconverted. And look what is said of these unconverted. Paul has just said in Galatians chapter 5, a fornicator is not going to inherit the kingdom of God. But in verse 21 of Revelation 9, he says, "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." So once again, the word fornication here would be inclusive of all sexual sins. Now, look back in your Bibles to the book of John chapter 8. Here is an interesting verse.

In fact, this is an accusation that the Pharisees are making against Christ. Here the word fornication has a very interesting meaning. It would either refer to adultery, or to an illicit, immoral relationship which culminated in an illegitimate birth. After Christ rebukes these Pharisees, they say, “Ye do the deeds of your father.” Then they answer, “We be not born of fornication.” What are they implying? They are implying that Christ is an illegitimate child. Why? Because of the virgin birth. Joseph was not the father of Jesus Christ; God the Father was the father of Jesus Christ. Thus,

anyone who produces a child either through adultery or through illegitimate, unlawful sexual intercourse is a fornicator, or is involved in fornication. They say, “We be not born of fornication.”

This word is also used specifically to refer to incest in the Bible. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Leviticus 18:8 says, “The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover, it is thy father's nakedness.” Leviticus 20:11 says, “And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness, both of them shall surely be put to death, their blood shall be upon them.”

This is what you and I would refer to as incest. There was a problem with this in the Corinthian church. In all probability, the woman was the man's stepmother, not his real mother. First Corinthians 5:1 says, “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication is not so much as named among the Gentiles that one should have his father's wife.” Here was a son who had taken his father's, quite probably, his stepmother. I don't know that for sure; that's what most of the commentators say. Paul says in verse 5 that such a one is to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, etc. Note that this incestuous relationship is referred to as fornication.

Now look in your Bibles to the book of Acts chapter 15. Acts chapter 15, here's the Jerusalem council and here's what they're saying. Acts 15, note if you would please verse 20. He says, "But that we write unto them," that is these people who were not there in Jerusalem, these were outside of Jerusalem, "but that we write unto them that they abstain from the pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." Then verse 29, they said again, "that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." So once again, it is referred to as fornication. Now, there's another incident. I want you to look in your Bibles to Revelation chapter 2. I want you to see what is referred to as fornication here. Of course, I hope that you know that in the Old Testament, especially those of you who were here when I preached through

Hosea, I preached 75 messages out of the book of Hosea, taking it chapter by chapter and verse by verse.

But I want you to remember that God called Israel's unfaithfulness to Him spiritual adultery. Do you remember that?

Now, look in the book of Revelation chapter 2 and verse 20. God says, "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not." So here, evidently, false teaching, rebellion against God, and false worship is classified as fornication. So Jezebel then was teaching this wrong, erroneous, heterodox doctrine that was contrary to the Word of God. And God calls it fornication. So just like unfaithfulness to truth in the Old Testament is idolatry, so unfaithfulness to truth in the New Testament is fornication.

It's a broader term, but it's there. Now, I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Judges chapter 19. This one ought to take the cake for you. Judges chapter 19.

Fornication as Rebellion: The Levite's Concubine

Everyone knows that fornication refers to sexual impurity in general. It can include adultery, as well as many other things, including uncleanness, lasciviousness, and wickedness. I really ought to read the entire account, but I will not be able to. There was a Levite out of Bethlehem, Judah, whose wife left him. Let us begin reading with verse 1: "It came to pass in those days when there was no king in Israel that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim who took to him a concubine out of Bethlehem, Judah." Now watch: he took him a concubine. I realize she is called a concubine there, but later she is called his wife. Verse 2 says, "...and his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him into her father's house to Bethlehem Judah, and was there four whole months."

"And her husband arose, and went after her to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and

a couple of asses. And she brought him into her father's house, and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him. And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him, and he abode with him three days, so they did eat and drink and lodge there." Here he is called her husband, and here he is called the father-in-law. We will come back to that in just a moment.

They leave to go home and reach a city of Benjamin. Because the Levite is not going to camp out in a city of the heathen, let us begin reading with verse 11: "And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent, and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn into the city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it. And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside thither into the city of a stranger that is not of the children of Israel."

“We will pass over to Gibeah.” And he said unto his servant, “Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night in Gibeah or in Ramah.” And they passed on their way, and went their way, and the sun went down upon them when they were in Gibeah, which belonged to Benjamin. And they turned aside to go in and lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he set him down in the street of the city, for there was no man that took them into his house to lodge in. And behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at Even, which was also Mount Ephraim, and he sojourned in Gibeah.

“And the men of the place were Benjamites. And when he lifted up his eyes and saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city, the old man said, Whither goest thou? Whence comest thou? And he said, We are passing from Bethlehem Judah toward the side of Mount Ephraim, from thence am I. And I went to Bethlehem, Judah, and am now going to the house of the Lord, and there is no man that receiveth me to house.”

“Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses, and there is bread and wine also for me and my handmaid. And for the young man which is thy servant, there is no want of anything.” In other words, no one has put us up, and yet we have all the food we need. All we need is a place to sleep. And the old man said, “Peace be on thee, howsoever. Let all thy wants lie upon me. I’ll feed you. I’ll take care of you.”

"Only lodge not in the street." When the man gets in, the men of the city come out and say, "Send the man out that we may know him." He says, "No," and tells them not to do that. "The master of the house went out on them, said, Nay, my brother, nay, I pray you do not so wickedly seeing this man is come into my house. Do not this folly."

"Behold, here is my daughter, a maiden." That is hard for me to comprehend. "And his concubine, then will I bring you out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you. But unto this man do not so vile a thing."

"But the men would not hearken him. So the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them. And they knew her, and abused her all the night into the morning. And when the day began to spring, they let her go. Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was till it was light. And her lord rose up in the morning and opened the doors of the house and went out to go in his way. And behold, the woman," talking about his wife, "falling out of the door of the house, and her hands were upon the threshold."

"And he said, Up, let us be going," but none answered. Then the man took her up. She was dead. They had killed her. "They took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up and got him to his place." Here is something a little gross and gruesome, but it happened: "And when he was coming to his house, he took a knife and laid hold of his concubine and divided her together with her bones into twelve pieces and sent her into all the coasts of Israel."

I am not going to get into the battle of the issue. What he was doing was saying, This is what my people, the Benjamites—this is what our people did to us. Here is what they did to my wife. Israel comes and fights against them, but here is what I want you to look at. Let us go back to verse 2: "And his concubine," that is, his wife, "played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house of Bethlehem Judah, and there abode four whole months." In the Septuagint, the phrase "played the whore against him" is translated, "she fornicated against him."

Was this woman having a sexual relationship with her father? No. That would have been incest, and certain and sure death. Moreover, if this had been the case, no Levite, no Israelite, but especially a Levite, would ever have deigned to go and retrieve her.

Look in your Bibles at Leviticus 19:29: “Do not prostitute thy daughter to cause her to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.” For a man’s daughter to be such was great infamy and great wickedness in the land. Look also in Deuteronomy 23:17.

Deuteronomy 23:17 says, “There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.” In Leviticus 21:7, concerning the Levites and priests, God says, “They shall not take a wife that is a whore or profane, neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband, for he is holy unto the Lord.” God absolutely forbade a Levite or priest to marry a whore or profane woman, or a woman put away from her husband, because the Levite is holy. Yet the Levite went to get his wife back.

Had she been what we would call sexually impure, he would never have gone after her. Adultery in the Old Testament, and in the New as well, merited the death penalty. Incest merited the death penalty. If this woman had been impure, or involved in incest, the Levite would never have gone after her. It was forbidden for him by God to have such a woman. Why, then, is she called a whore, or a fornicator, when she was not physically involved with any other man?

Because fornication is also rebellion and stubbornness. This woman would not submit to her husband's authority. She did not like being submissive, so she ran away to her father's house—not because she was sexually impure or had committed a sexual act against him, but because she was stubborn and rebellious. She left him, and God calls it fornication. A person can therefore be a fornicator and never commit a sexually impure act, because that person can be stubborn and rebellious like this woman. Here, fornication is stubbornness and rebellion.

According to all the Scriptures considered, fornication is any and all kinds of uncleanness, lasciviousness, pornography, impure

thoughts, premarital sex of any kind, and unfaithfulness to one's spouse of any kind whatsoever. It does not matter whether it is a man, woman, boy, or girl. All of that is fornication, including stubbornness, rebellion, contempt, and irreverence.

Application: The Destructive Nature of Fornication

Ephesians 5:33 says, “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.” What is my requirement from God? That I love my wife even as I love myself. What is God's requirement for my wife? “And the wife see that she reverence her husband.” She is to honor him—not be sarcastic with him, hold him in contempt or disgust, but honor her husband. When a wife dishonors and treats her husband with contempt and irreverence, and is stubborn and rebellious, it is called fornication in Scripture. Fornication, then, is a very, very broad word.

It covers all impurity whatsoever. If I had time, I would take you back through Proverbs. When you get home, take the time to read Proverbs 5, 6, and 7. You will find that the Word of God forbids all impurity in every area of our life.

This is the will of God; we do not have to guess about it: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” That is your holiness. You are being set apart exclusively for God's use, prepared for God and for His work. You are to be upright. This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you abstain from fornication: all impurity, all uncleanness, all perverseness, all stubbornness, all rebellion, and all irreverence.

Why is fornication specified? Because the Bible created what you and I would know as a family society, or a society based upon the family—a familistic society. The family is the very center of society. Without the family, you cannot have a church; without the family, you cannot have a government. The family is absolutely fundamental to life.

Consider the wife first. If she is unfaithful, what is she doing? First of all, she is introducing an alien loyalty to the home. If she conceives, she is introducing an alien seed. On the part of the husband, it is also treason and disloyalty. It also undermines his

moral authority. Let me go further: it undermines his headship. A morally clean, morally pure husband can exercise headship with authority and confidence. But a husband that has been compromised through sexual impurity...

He is either arbitrary or weak, willing to give in to account for his sins. He has no confidence and cannot exercise his authority. So fornication and everything that falls under the umbrella of fornication is destructive of the home, the family, society, the church, and the nation. If you do not believe that, look at the White House. Look at Congress.

And you know why Clinton's approval rating is still high? Because the majority of the people in this country do the same thing he does, and it excuses their rebellion and their sin. And God says, “This is my will for you, that you abstain from fornication.”

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ for your love and mercy in our lives. We pray, Father, that you would indeed make us holy and godly, sanctify us, set us apart exclusively for yourself and for your use. May we love Thee with all of our hearts and souls, in Christ's name, Amen.

CHAPTER 7

6 Sanctification & Sexual Purity

October 22, 2007

1 Thessalonians chapter 4, first eight verses: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit."

Review of the Passage Outline

We have been teaching for the last five weeks from this passage on sanctification and sexual purity. Let me give you the outline we are following. In verse 1, you have an exhortation, where he exhorts you by the Lord Jesus. There were three things in this verse. First, a practical necessity: he said that you have received of us, that is, you must be taught. Second, a personal application: how you ought to walk and please God; the truth must be personally applied. Third, the progressive reality: he said, and so you would abound more and more. There is to be no neutrality and no regression; we are to be continually advancing in holiness and righteousness.

In verse 2, you have an explanation: "for ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus." This is how they received of the apostles how they ought to walk and to please God. In other words, they were expounding, explaining, and applying the commandments of God. They were not just quoting the Ten Commandments; they were explaining them and expounding them and applying them.

In verses 3 through 5, you have the exposition. First, an affirmation: "this is the will of God." Second, an explanation: "even your sanctification." Third, a negation: "that ye should abstain from fornication." Then in verses 4 and 5, you have a clarification. Verse 4 is the truth clarified and positively stated: "that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour." Verse 5 is the truth clarified and negatively stated: "not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

When we left off last week, we were on the fourth point and elaboration, "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the matter." In other words, he is teaching us that seduction, fornication, adultery is not only a violation of the seventh commandment, it is also a violation of the eighth commandment, "thou shalt not steal," because it is a defrauding. That is why in Exodus chapter 22, and also in Deuteronomy chapter 22, there was restitution that was to be made for seduction. A man had to give a three years' dowry, which was a three years' wage to the woman that he seduced. So God calls it a defrauding.

The Warning of Sexual Impurity: God as Avenger

Last week we looked at the fact that he elaborated in verse 6 as to the willfulness of sexual impurity manward. Today we take up the second sub-point: Paul elaborates as to the warning of sexual impurity. He says in verse 6, "that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the matter," and here's the warning, "because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified." Note that warning: "because that the Lord is the avenger of all such."

That one thought should have an absolute deterring effect upon fornicators and fornication, when you realize that the Lord Himself is the avenger of all such. The word "avenger" here is from the Greek word ekdikos. Ek is the preposition, which means "out of," and dikos is "righteousness." Literally, he is saying, "for the Lord is the one that executes His righteousness," or exacts His justice, or executes His justice.

He said in verse 6, "we have also forewarned you and testified." The word "forewarned" simply means previously told. In other words, he said, "we told you previously that the Lord will avenge all such." But when you get to the word "and testified," it literally means solemnly witnessed to. In other words, Paul was deadly serious when he was telling them that it was God himself who would avenge all such fornicators.

Just stop and think: that is an absolutely awesome thought. The man or the woman who is engaged in sexual impurity, who is engaged in fornication, is going to be confronted and dealt with by God Himself.

Now hold 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, but look in your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 5. Look at what God says: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility."

Now watch this statement: "For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." The word "resisteth" in the Greek is antitassō, and it literally means that God appears in battle array against the proud. In other words, God prepares Himself for battle. God fights against the proud. Now, if God merely fights against us,

who is going to win? Very clearly God is. But when you come to fornicators, it is not that God just simply fights against us. He does fight against us, but He does more. He avenges Himself. That is, He executes His righteousness and He brings out His justice.

Now let me show you. Look in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews 13 and verse 4. Here it is again spelled out in black and white. Note what the Bible says: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." And the word "judge" here is the word krinō, which means to try or to judge judicially. It means to pass a sentence upon. It means to execute and to punish and to avenge. So when he says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 that God is the avenger of all such, He is saying that God himself is going to execute his sentence. He is going to pass judgment and he is going to exact his righteousness. Now we have two passages that teach us that God is the judge. That God is the executioner.

But you have got to ask yourself this question. Since God is the judge and since God is the executioner of his righteousness and his justice, where is that justice found? And the answer is, in His law. You could ask, where are the penalties for such found? And the answer is, in His law.

Now listen to me carefully. The law is the standard of judgment. How can I say that? Well, look in 1 John chapter 3 and verse 4. You should be able to quote this verse, but look at it. Look what God says: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also what? The law. For sin is the transgression of the law." How do we know what sin is? Because the law says "thou shalt not." Well, what standard does God use then when He judges? The law. So what is God going to do? He's going to execute the penalty of His broken law. Since God's avenging is in the context of fornication in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, we must discover then the penalties for fornication in the Bible.

The Penalty for Fornication in the Law

Now remember, I took one message and just preached on the negation, "that ye should abstain from fornication." We went through the Old Testament and through the New Testament and

showed you that fornication is an exceedingly broad term. It includes adultery, bestiality, seduction, rape, and even stubbornness and rebellion. But let me just take a few moments and show you the penalties for each of these in the Bible.

Look in your Bibles, first of all, holding 1 Thessalonians 4, but look to the book of Leviticus, chapter 20, verse 10. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." The penalty was death.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 22, beginning there with verse 23. "If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you." So the penalty for adultery under the law is death. Since we're in Deuteronomy chapter 22, let's look at verse 25. "But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die." So God then demands the death penalty for adultery, God demands the death penalty for rape, and I want you to go back to the book of Leviticus chapter 20, and I want you to see that God demands the death penalty for incest.

Look at Leviticus chapter 20, beginning with verse 11. "And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them." Verse 14: "And if a man take a wife and her mother, that is his mother-in-law, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you." Verse 17: "And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a wicked thing. And they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity." So adultery, rape,

and incest all demand the death penalty. In Leviticus 20:13, the penalty for sodomy is the same: "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." Now turn to Romans chapter 1, and see that the penalty is exactly the same. Romans 1:24: "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." I pointed out a few weeks ago that fornication is not only wicked and wrong, it is a dishonoring of your own body. Verse 25: "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

Now watch, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." In other words, they deserved what they got, death. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death. Not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Now, I want to go back and point out verse 32, "who knowing the judgment of God." How do we know the judgment of God against incest and fornication and sodomy? It's revealed in the law. Look in your Bibles, if you would, please, to the book of Leviticus chapter 21, verse 9. I want you to understand that prostitution was forbidden as well. "And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire." Look in Deuteronomy 23, verse 17. Here's a broad

statement. "There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel."

This next verse clarifies something: "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto the LORD thy God." All my life I was taught that you are not supposed to sell a dog. Why? Because the Bible says you are not to bring the price of a dog into the house of God. But it has nothing to do with a little four-legged creature. A dog is a sodomite, a man. The hire of the whore is the woman. God is saying that His society, His kingdom, is not to be subsidized by an alien law structure; it is to be subsidized by His people with their tithe and their offerings. So the dog is a male prostitute; it has nothing to do with a little four-legged animal, and God says it deserves death. Here is another one that deserves death, included under fornication: Leviticus chapter 20, verse 16—"And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." And in Exodus chapter 22, verse 19, God says, "Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death." So bestiality also demands the death penalty.

Now, I want to take you through the book of Proverbs. Turn to Proverbs chapter 2, and note that in this wisdom literature, the death penalty is always associated with harlotry, prostitution, adultery, whatever. Here is one of the reasons God gave the book of Proverbs, His wisdom: “To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.” What does God say? God says, you go into a harlot; you're killing yourself. It's death.

SCRIPTURE READING - Proverbs 5:1-11 (KJV)

> My son, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: that thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil:

but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a twoedged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.

SCRIPTURE READING - Proverbs 5:20-23; 6:23-32 (KJV)

What's he talking about, death? "And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray."

"For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; but if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul."

SCRIPTURE READING - Proverbs 6:34-35; 7:4-17 (KJV)

“A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man:

therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance." What's he talking about? Death. "Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: Now is she without, now in the streets, and lieth in wait at every corner.) So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows. Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry, with carved works, with fine linen of Egypt. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

SCRIPTURE READING - Proverbs 7:18-27; Proverbs 9:13-18 (KJV)

"Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves. For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: he hath taken a bag of money with him, and will come home at the day appointed. With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through his liver. As a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

God says, "A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on

> a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

We live in the age of what is known as the sexual revolution. Promiscuity and sexual impurity do not bring life; they do not bring vigor; they do not bring vitality; they do not bring health; they do not bring happiness. What they do bring is death — and only death.

Now, you said, "Brother Weaver, when you discussed fornication, you covered all of these things and showed me how they are involved under this broad umbrella of fornication. But there was one other part of fornication that you pointed out that you haven't mentioned today, and that is stubbornness and rebellion." Well, I want to cover that because I want you to look in your Bibles at 1 Samuel 15. I want you to see that fornication merits the death penalty.

God sent King Saul on a mission: he had only to kill all the Amalekites. But King Saul spared the best of the sheep and the best of the oxen, and Agag, the king of the Amalekites. Samuel comes to him and says, in verse 22, after Saul gives this objection to Samuel, "But the people spared them that we may sacrifice them to God." And Samuel asks, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft."

How God Executes the Penalty

What is done with a witch? Burn, put to death. “And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” What is done with an idolater? Put to death. So stubbornness and rebellion merit the death penalty as well, and all fornication brings the death penalty. Now that the penalty for fornication is established as death, we must ask another question: How does God execute that penalty? Many people think that just because God does not instantly smite

someone, they have gotten away with their sin. But God's paydays are not always on Friday. Look at Deuteronomy 32:35 and watch carefully. Remember now, God says he is the avenger, which means he is the executioner. He is the one who takes vengeance. In Deuteronomy 32:35 he says, "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence." Look what he says about the wicked: "Their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." What does God say? "Their foot shall slide in due time." In Numbers chapter 32 and verse 23, God said it like this: "Be sure your sin will find you out." You see, no one is going to get away with any wickedness.

How God Executes His Justice

Several ways He can do so. First, personally. God may execute His justice upon the fornicator personally. Do you remember what the Bible says in Ezekiel 18:4? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and "the wages of sin is death." So God could, if He was so pleased, execute the fornicator instantly, a week later, a month later, or a year later. But I want you to remember something: it is the judge who sets the execution date. It is the judge who determines the manner of the execution. The prisoner has no say so in it. So when God is the judge and the avenger, He determines the execution date and the method of execution. It is solely and totally in the judge's discretion.

Now let me cover some objections, because inevitably these are going to come up. Someone says, "Oh, but Brother Weaver, I know you've just shown me from the Bible that the penalty for adultery is death, the penalty for fornication is death, the penalty for rape and incest is death. I understand that, but Brother Weaver, David committed adultery and he didn't die." Well, look in your Bibles to 2 Samuel chapter 12. I will tell you why David did not die.

Objections Addressed: David and the Adulterous Woman

I will show it to you in black and white. Although David did not die, his child did. I will cover David's reaping when he sowed a little bit later, but understand: the only reason David was not

executed was that God sovereignly pardoned him. David merited the death penalty on two points. He had not only committed adultery; he had Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, murdered with the sword of the children of Ammon. Notice what David said when Nathan had told him the story: 'And David's anger was greatly kindled; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.' And Nathan said, 'Thou art the man.' In verse 13, 'David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.'

David is the exception, not the rule. Too many people want to identify with David and his sin, but not with his repentance and reaping what he has sown. God sovereignly pardoned him; God can do as he pleases, and in this instance He sovereignly pardoned David.

Turning to John chapter 8, because inevitably someone says, "Brother Weaver, the death penalty for adultery has been done away with in the New Testament by Christ." That is not true. Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The word "fulfil" is plēroō, meaning literally to put it into full force as continuous.

John 8:1–11: "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had

lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

People read this and say, "See, Jesus has done away with the death penalty," but the answer is absolutely no. He did not do away with the death penalty; Christ came to fulfill the law. Why did he not have this woman executed then? There are very good answers. First, it was the scribes and the Pharisees who brought the woman, and they said, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act."

Now, I've got a question, and everybody ought to have the same question. It takes two to commit adultery. So where was the man? Why did they not bring him? Clearly, they were not even interested in justice. They were interested in putting Christ in the pickle. If Christ had said, "Take her out and stone her," how is he going to be known as the friend of sinners? So what did Jesus Christ do?

I don't have time to go into all of this. But if you'll go back to the book of Numbers, you'll find the law of jealousy. This could not have ever gone to trial, because in the Bible, the victim was the woman's husband. Where was he? He was supposed to be pushing the case. He was not even there. The Pharisees had usurped the position and authority of the husband. So Jesus knelt down and wrote in the dust.

In the law of jealousy, the high priest would bend down and write in the dust. He would write a curse. I don't actually know what Jesus Christ wrote. I've got a pretty good idea, I think. Since those Pharisees and scribes were trying to get something on Him and checking up on Him, probably what Christ did was simply write down dates and times and places that they themselves had committed adultery, or names of women that they had been with themselves. Why would He do that?

Well, look what He said. Verse 7, "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." That is a very general statement, but in the Greek, there is a definite article

in front of the word "sin." Literally, he says, "He that is without the sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." In the Bible, and in our jurisprudence, we have what is known as the law of clean hands. That means if I'm going to accuse Tony of something, of a crime, I have to be innocent of that crime myself. Because if I accuse him of something and get him condemned, guess what? I've just turned around and condemned myself. It's called the law of clean hands. You'll find it in Black's Law Dictionary, Bouvier's Dictionary, it's in the Bible.

This is what Jesus Christ is saying: if you have not committed the act of adultery, you cast the first stone. You can be the executioner. Don't you remember, the witnesses in the Bible had to lay their hands upon the victim first. So what happened? They, being convicted by their own conscience, went out from the eldest to the youngest. And Jesus looked up to the woman and said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers?" She said, "No man, Lord." He said, "Neither I condemn thee." Why would Christ not condemn the woman? Go back to the law of God. What does the Bible demand for the death penalty? Two witnesses. How many witnesses were there to testify against her? None. Jesus did not nullify the death penalty for adultery. He did not even have enough evidence to have a trial. There were no accusers. Her husband was not complaining. He was not pushing the case. So Jesus Christ did the only thing he could do lawfully: he dismissed the case. And when she said, "No man, Lord," I am bowing to your sovereign authority. Then he said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." So very clearly Christ was not simply doing away with the death penalty. He just simply had no grounds to hold a trial for this woman in John chapter 8.

Church Discipline as Ecclesiastical Execution

Now, I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. You see, we are in a similar position today in one sense of the word. While the church does have the absolute authority to try cases, there is an ecclesiastical law in the Bible. There is an ecclesiastical court in the Bible. While the church has the power to have trials and hold courts, the church does not have the power to execute the death penalty with a sword. Physically. But there is a

way that the church can execute the death penalty. Look in 1 Corinthians 5, verse 1. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed."

Now watch what he says: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." He is talking about church discipline—excommunication. Here is a fornicator who will not repent. God says you have a church trial, you discipline him, and you turn him out. How is that the death penalty? Jesus Christ said in Proverbs 8:36, "All they that hate me love death." If he is outside the church, he is dead.

When governments will not fulfill the statutes of God, the church can do what I have just shared from 1 Corinthians 5: excommunicate and discipline them. In the early church, people who were adulterers or fornicators, who had repented and were admitted back into fellowship, were called the walking dead. We have forgiven them because they have sinned, but that does not stop God from executing his penalty and justice in his time.

Let me come to one other objection. You say, "But Brother Weaver, I have known individuals who have committed fornication and adultery, and they are still alive. I witnessed the first fornicator, President Clinton. He is still alive." All I can say is, "Their foot shall slide in due time." Everyone who thinks they have gotten away with their sin is in for a big surprise. Beside physical death, there is also a covenantal death, an emotional death, a financial death, a political death. Proverbs 16:7 says, "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." The opposite is also true: when a man's ways displease the LORD, God raises up enemies against him.

That is what He did to Solomon. So God can, if He so choose, execute the penalty personally. Secondly, God, if He so chooses, may execute the penalty familially, that is, in the family. This would be an aspect of Galatians 6:7–8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." You not only reap what you sow, you many times reap more than you sow. You can plant one grain of corn and get a stalk with several ears and hundreds of grains.

Familial and National Reaping

David committed adultery with Bathsheba. So many people think that David got away with his sin. It is true David did not die at that time, but he did not get away with his sin. In 2 Samuel 12:11, God tells David, "Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." David, you commit adultery with a woman. Now, somebody is going to commit adultery with your wives.

In 2 Samuel 16:21, we see who that someone was: "And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong." David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and his son committed adultery and incest with David's wives. David committed adultery. His child died. Absalom, his own son, had an incestuous and adulterous relationship with some of David's wives. Amnon, his own son, raped his half-sister Tamar. Absalom then murdered his half-brother Amnon for raping Tamar. And then Absalom came back and ran his own daddy off the throne and decided to kill him. David only committed adultery with Bathsheba. But look how many of his wives were ruined and his children's lives were ruined.

This is known in the Bible as the Lex Talionis, the law of retribution. Look in your Bibles to Hosea 4. This is very frightening and awesome. We're talking about the law of retribution, reaping what you have sown. Hosea 4, verse 12, speaks of spiritual adultery: "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God." Now, spiritual adultery always produces physical adultery. Verse 13: "They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall." God said, you started it, and now your children and your wives are going to do it. God said, I'm going to let you reap exactly what you have sown. If you do not want your spouse committing adultery, then you don't do it. If you do not want your children to be whoremongers and fornicators and adulterers, then you don't do it.

Because God can execute His justice familially, within the family, and not just personally. I know a gentleman, one of the kindest, gentlest men I've ever known. He told me his wife was running around on him, and I said, "We need to confront her." He dropped his head: "But I started it. I let an old girlfriend talk me into staying with her one night. My wife had been faithful to me for nearly 30 years, and when she found out that I had slept with this woman one time..." She was so hurt and so angry that she tried to get back at me. And this woman had not been with one man; by the time I was talking to him, probably hundreds of men. You talk about the spirit of whoredoms—that's what he saw in Hosea chapter 4. This man was devastated, not just because of what his wife was doing, but he realized he started it. And he was reaping what he had sown. Thirdly, God can execute His judgment ecclesiastically, that is in the church. Look in your Bible to Revelation chapter 2, verse 18. "And unto the angel of the church

in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."

SCRIPTURE READING - Revelation 2:19-23 (KJV)

> "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." You know what's wrong with our churches, folks? Our Lord has killed most of them. Not only because of spiritual adultery, unthankfulness to God and His Word, but the average church today is full of fornicators and adulterers that have never been disciplined and have never repented. And God said, "I will kill the church." "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." God can execute personally, familially, ecclesiastically, one other, nationally.

Jeremiah chapter 5, beginning with verse 7. God tells His people, the nation Israel, "How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" In verse 10 God says, "Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the LORD's. For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD. They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine." In verse 23 God says, "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are

revolted and gone. Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you. For among my people are found wicked men."

They lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge." "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" This nation puts up with an adulterous, fornicating president and Congress because it is an adulterous, fornicating nation. So the nation is under death sentence from God. And God will just as surely judge this nation, not just for abortion—that's bad enough in itself—not just for our fraud and deceit—that's bad enough in itself—but for our fornication, spiritually and physically. You say, "Brother Weaver, how does God judge a nation?" Well, how did he judge Babylon and Rome? The Hittites, the Jebusites, the Perizzites, the Hivites—where are they? He executed the death penalty upon them. The timing and the place, the method and the manner of God's execution is at his own discretion. What did he say in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4? 1 Thessalonians 4 verse 6.

Final Application and Warning

"That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in the matter"—that is, in the matter of his wife or daughter—"because that the Lord is the avenger," the executioner who exacts righteousness, judgment, and justice, "of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified." My first application is this: every fornicator, both spiritually and physically, shall be dealt with by God himself. If all God has to do is to kill us, to withhold our breath, what do you think it's going to be like for the individual whom God appears in arms against? Second, no city, county, state, or federal government can repeal the law of God or the sentence he

has imposed for its violation. The death penalty stands; it is up to God when, how, and where he executes it. He may do so personally, familially, ecclesiastically, or nationally, for all he chooses, for he is the judge. And he said, "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

Let's pray. Father, we are thankful for Jesus Christ, for his grace, mercy, and salvation. We are thankful there is forgiveness for our sins and grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. But Father, may we see and weigh carefully and seriously what it is to sin against Thee and to grieve Thee. May we understand the penalty of our actions, and that you demand sexual purity in our lives as part and parcel of our sanctification. This is the will of God.

"Even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified." May we remember, Lord, and be holy, pure, and godly. Amen.

CHAPTER 8

Manson Jolley

June 26, 2008

The Biblical Avenger of Blood

Introduction to the Biblical Avenger of Blood

The message is on Manson Jolly, the South Carolina Avenger, and you will understand the man's name and the title shortly. In Deuteronomy 19:11–13, God says: “But if any man hate his neighbor and lie in wait for him and rise up against him and smite him mortally that he die and fleeth into one of these cities, then the elders of this city shall send and fetch him thence and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood that he may die. Thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel that it may go well with thee.”

There is a truth in the Bible about the biblical doctrine of vengeance. In fact, I have an entire book on the biblical truth concerning God's righteous vengeance, and one chapter deals with the blood avenger mentioned here in verse 12: “Deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood.” The avenger of blood in the

Bible was usually a family member, sometimes the closest family member, to a murdered man.

It was his responsibility to make sure that the murderer was put to death. This was not vengeance or vindictiveness. If you read Joshua 20, Numbers 35, and Deuteronomy 19, you will find that God said this was to be done so that blood guiltiness would not be upon the land. It was to ensure that justice was done. Who would be more concerned about justice than the family of the man whose loved one had been murdered?

God also designed cities of refuge. If someone killed another person accidentally, as you and I would describe it, he fled to the city of refuge. There was a trial, and if it was found that he had not premeditatedly murdered, he had to stay in the city of refuge until the high priest died. Then he could return home. But if the trial found that the man was a premeditated murderer, the elders delivered him into the hand of the avenger of blood, and the avenger put him to death.

God's Use of Avengers in Scripture

As you read through the Bible, there are plenty of times when God sent avengers in the strictest sense of the word. Do you realize that the whole book of Judges is about God's divine vengeance against the wicked? Ehud took a knife and stabbed Eglon, the king who was a wicked, ungodly tyrant. I could tell you about Jephthah, Saul, and David. The Bible tells us that they sang about Saul and David: Saul had slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands. Do you remember when God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt? He put a sword in their hand and said, "You kill all of the Amorites and the Hittites and the Jebusites and Hivites and all of those." Vengeance belongs to God, but God does occasionally use His people. If you read Psalm 149, you will find that God does indeed say that. There have been times in history when God has allowed an avenger to rise.

Manson Jolly: The South Carolina Avenger

One of those, I believe, was Manson Jolly. All I can say about Manson Jolly is, what a name and what a man. Many have never

heard the name of Manson Jolly or had any idea that such an individual ever lived. I can assure you that during the war of northern aggression and afterward, during the time of Reconstruction, there were many Yankees who wished they had never heard the name or met the man, because Manson Jolly killed most of the Yankees he met, especially those who were terrorizing southern civilians.

He had no love for carpetbaggers or scalawags either. There are so many tales about Manson Jolly that it is difficult sometimes to separate fact from legend. The best way I could describe him is as a combination of Josey Wales, John Wayne, Robin Hood, and John Singleton Mosby. He was a man. Manson Jolly stood six feet four inches tall, with blue eyes and red hair and a temperament to match.

He did not have much schooling, but he was a very highly literate individual. He was a farmer by trade and a soldier by calling, and he did both very, very well. He was deadly serious in battle, and he used a knife, a pistol, or a rifle with equal ease. He rode like an Indian and fought like a tiger. He was a cavalry sergeant, and he was exceedingly courageous and brave.

One night, a man who was with Manson Jolly recalled how, on a foray, they slipped up upon a Yankee outpost guarded by three Union soldiers. Jolly quickly dispatched all three with his knife. They never even knew he was around. On another night, Jolly left the camp by himself and, before morning, returned with a very fine horse and a beautiful saddle belonging to a Union officer. He very politely presented the horse and saddle to his captain. He was a man who meant business.

Don Hurd, author of The South Carolina Upcountry, said this about Manson Jolly: “Manson Sherrill Jolly was born in the Lebanon community of Anderson district, that is Anderson, South Carolina, in 1840 to Joseph Morehead Jolly and Anna Cole Sherrill. He was one of 11 children.”

Cultural Background and Upbringing

Before the Civil War, Manson worked on the family farm. His work was interrupted only by infrequent attendance at the Lebanon Community School and church on Sunday. At the community school, he learned arithmetic, writing, penmanship, grammar, and reading, mostly passages from the Bible. He also read the works of Thomas More and Walter Scott. In studying Manson, it is important to realize the culture in which he lived. The culture of his day held many of the romantic ideas found in the literature he was reading.

Hurd writes, “The upcountry of South Carolina was made up of hard-working farmers. These people saw themselves as heroic, chivalrous knights ready to defend their homeland. The upcountry men of that time were puritanical, fundamental Christians, yet they hailed to the idea of a slave-based southern economy, though most people did not own slaves and those that did found slaves to be less and less profitable after 1840.”

“Law and order were the creed of their lives,” Hurd continues, “but they maintained a certain disregard for life. The slightest threat or insult, real or imagined, to their or their family's honor demanded immediate reprisals with fists and or guns.” Manson grew up in this culture, in which men felt honor bound to defend family, womanhood, and Mother Carolina.

Would it be wonderful if we had some men today who felt honor bound to defend their family, the righteousness and principles of truth, their state, and their mothers? Hurd continues: “The generation of Manson Jolly did not recognize a civil war as a war between people of the same country, but as a war for southern rights against tyrannical northern aggression.”

They believed that they were fighting for a righteous cause against an evil one. It is also important to understand that Manson, like most returning Confederate veterans, viewed the occupying Union forces as foreign invaders, as alien as you and I would recognize German or Japanese occupying forces. Therefore, one must realize that Manson was molded by the culture in which he was raised. It is very difficult for us to understand these men

who lived in times past unless we understand their culture. During this time in South Carolina, Manson Jolly was the David who fought the Goliath. He was the giant killer in South Carolina.

Reconstruction Injustices and Jolly's Vow

All southern states suffered immensely after the war. But since South Carolina was the mother of secession, the Reconstructionists made sure that South Carolina suffered greatly. You need to read the book The Sack of Columbia if you have never read it, just to find out what the Union people did to Columbia, South Carolina. Dr. Roper was talking about Mississippi. Did you realize Mississippi was not only one of the richest states before the war, but after the war, most of the budget of the state went to support and buy artificial limbs for Confederate soldiers?

Virgin timber was sold to carpetbaggers for as little as 10 cents an acre. These people wanted to make sure that the South suffered. During the War of Northern Aggression, Manson distinguished himself in the Confederate Army, first in the infantry and later in the cavalry, rising to the rank of first sergeant. He was apparently in Wade Hampton's cavalry forces when Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox and headed home to Anderson, South Carolina, vowing that he would never surrender. An August 1861 furlough containing his physical description says he joined Company H of the 1st South Carolina Infantry Regiment, yet newspaper accounts and statements of former comrades-in-arms listed him as a member of Company F, 1st S.C. Cavalry. Evidently, he went through the war from Manassas to Appomattox, usually as a cavalry scout. After the war, Manson returned home to the Lebanon district of Anderson, South Carolina, where his name became synonymous with heroism and a noble sense of honor and courage.

In fact, many people in Anderson, South Carolina, viewed Manson as the embodiment of resistance against tyranny and injustice. To understand that tyranny and injustice, you have to read what happened during Reconstruction. He came home to Anderson and found it occupied by Massachusetts troops, Negroes, and later a Maine regiment. By Negroes, I am not talking

about the slaves and the people with whom they had grown up, but Massachusetts blacks in federal uniform who made it a particular joy to persecute white men, harass them, rape white women, and steal everything they could. Carpetbaggers, freedmen, and Union troops viewed South Carolina as the soul of secession, and they were going to make it pay.

That explains, or at least should explain, the continued attitude of most Southerners concerning Yankee treatment, because that has never been forgotten. I have been preaching for about forty-four years. When I first started traveling, there was a man in the church in Thomasville, Georgia. On my first trip up north, when I came home, he came to me, put his hands on his hips, and looked me in the eyes.

He said, "Brother Weaver, how did those Yankees treat you?" He was going to be upset if I had not been treated well up north. I laughed and said, "Well, they treated me very well." But you have to understand that when Manson became an avenger, it may not have been a choice he made. I do not think Manson simply sat around and said, "I'm going to do this and this and this."

I believe the time and circumstances were forced upon him. He found himself, his family, his neighbors, and his friends being wronged on every hand. Wrongs, injustices, and outrages were constantly committed by those in charge. The land was stolen. The livestock was stolen. The silverware was stolen. Brother Kenneth talked about the book on Beast Butler and my collection of silverware. What he did not tell you was that Beast Butler's nickname was Spoons, because he stole all the silverware. They stole everything. If you had to pay taxes and did not have the money, that was fine.

They took your hogs, your cows, and your chickens, leaving you absolutely nothing. What could not be stolen from the South illegally was stolen legally. They would find a fruitful farm or beautiful house they wanted, then continue raising the taxes until the person living there could not pay. The property would be confiscated by a Union man for nonpayment of taxes. By the time he had it in his hands, the taxes were either written off or

immediately lowered. Thus, Southern civilians had their property stolen from them.

When you went to the provost marshal to complain, you were usually arrested. One of Manson Jolly's friends complained and spent six months in jail for saying that his property had been stolen. Times were very rough, and outrage was everywhere.

Manson Jolly lost five brothers in the war. Four—James, John, Joseph, and William—were killed in battles. The fifth, Jesse, died in an army hospital, which was not much safer than a battlefield in those days. Manson then decided to make a vow: he would kill a quota of Yankees for each of his five brothers who had died in the war. Various accounts differ as to whether Manson agreed with himself to kill five or more for each of his dead brothers.

There is no exact number, and no agreement on how many he actually killed; estimates range from fifteen to one hundred. It seems fairly certain that before he died, he had obtained his quota of Yankees, not counting the carpetbaggers and scalawags. He primarily went after the soldiers.

There is no doubt about his courage and fortitude. In the official records of the Union and Confederate Army, Series 1, Volume 35, Part 1, page 401, we read: "Lieutenant Colonel J.D. Twiggs of the South Carolina Cavalry commends Sergeant Jolly for efficient services and gallant manner in the destruction of the U.S. transport Boston at Chapman's Fort, Asheboro River, South Carolina." Thus, he was commended in the official records.

Jolly was so sought after that he is mentioned in another book, The Imprisonment and Trial of Francis Gaines Stowers, quoted from Coldwater Community in Elbert County, Georgia. One officer described the effort to capture him: "There were probably other persons present who participated in the affair and who were never arrested. I tried very hard indeed to secure one of them, a notorious fellow by the name of Jolly, who escaped into Tennessee and from thence I hear is going to Texas. He was undoubtedly one of the men who fired upon the soldiers and I have no doubt he was one of the worst."

Exploits and Legendary Confrontations

Jolly certainly did not care much for the Yankees, who were terrorizing the people of South Carolina. Burnet P. Maybank, governor of South Carolina in 1941, wrote a guide to the Palmetto State and spoke of Manson Jolly: “During the Reconstruction period, when feeling ran high in the community, Anderson produced a remarkable character, Manson Jolly, whose exploits on his horse Ironsides—actually, his horse’s name was Dixie—are still vividly remembered. Jolly became involved, justifiably so some say, with federal military authorities soon after being mustered out of the Confederate Army.” The governor was saying that many considered Jolly justified in what he did.

“Tradition records that a Union officer sent two mounted Negroes,” Federal troops, “to Jolly’s farm to apprehend him, but neither ever returned. When Jolly was later observed plowing their horses, it was deemed wiser to send four Negroes.”

These also failed to return. A whole company of federal troopers next attempted to capture Jolly as he was attending church, but he leaped into the pulpit and fled out the window. The following day, he walked boldly into Anderson, brandished a pistol at the colonel of the regiment, and demanded the return of his horse, which he had left behind on his hurried exit. The frightened colonel is said to have granted Jolly not only his horse, but unconditional amnesty as well.

He soon got into more trouble, however, fled to Texas, bought a ranch, married, made a belated attempt to settle down, and then his career was soon ended, he goes on. The governor of South Carolina was saying that Jolly was something else. Articles continued to be written about Manson Jolly well after the war. One article in the state newspaper, dated August 7, 1932, bore the headline, "Manson Jolly, Anderson Guerrilla Kept Federal Garrison in Terror." One man kept an entire federal garrison in terror. A series of articles by Steve Bionotto appeared in the Anderson Independent Mail in April 1981, titled "The Legend of Manson Jolly" and "Manson Jolly the Man."

In the latter article, he tells of a stolen watch, illustrating how these patrols constantly harassed the people. One Union patrol, prowling about the Jolly household, invaded the home, and a soldier stole a watch belonging to Manson's younger sister, Mary. The next day, Lieutenant Chase of the 25th Michigan Infantry, a Union regiment quartered in Anderson, was talking with Pendleton Mayor James Hunter on the Pendleton Town Square.

A lone horseman slowly cantered toward them. As he neared, Lieutenant Chase recognized the rider as Manson Jolly. The lieutenant grabbed Manson's reins and pleaded with Hunter to help him arrest the outlaw. But Manson's revolver flashed out. He trained it on the Yankee officer and looked hard at Hunter, a man who owed his position to federal appointment. Hunter declined to assist, and the eager lieutenant soon quieted down. Manson first demanded that the northern officer supply whiskey coolers for his friends lounging in the town square. The officer cheaply complied, and then Manson said, "A watch belonging to my sister was stolen from her yesterday by one of your soldiers.

“I mean to have it back, and it will be done. If it is not returned by tomorrow, I will come looking for you. And when I look for a man, I always find him.” Manson then coolly spurred his horse, Dixie, without looking back and rode away to the cheers of his friends in the town square. The next day, the watch was returned to Mary Jolly.

Naturally, when someone is cool and courageous, unafraid of the powers that be, and receiving attention, praise, and recognition, there are always some who want to cash in on that individual’s reputation. One such man began spreading rumors and lying about Manson Jolly. His name was Thomas Harper.

Manson was not in the area. When he heard what Thomas Harper was saying about him, he wrote his sister: “I’ve understood since I left South Carolina that Thomas Harper has been calling me a murderer and a highway robber. He would be a little surprised if I were to ride up into Anderson and throw a lasso on him and wear him out with a Texas rawhide whip. I don’t suppose he ever thinks of this.”

He meant that he would take care of it, he assured her. There are many testimonies concerning Manson Jolly. One paper by Lieutenant Colonel Trowbridge recounts his firsthand experience with Jolly. Though written in 1904, Trowbridge still remembered it. He wrote: “After I had my breakfast, I stepped out on the porch, leaving my pistol in my room, went up to Jolly to the edge of the sidewalk, saying, ‘My name is Manson Jolly, the man you’re looking for. Now take me if you can.’”

Then he spurred his horse and rode away. On Thursday and the next day, a courier arrived saying that the man we wanted would be at church on Sunday at a little meetinghouse about twelve miles from Anderson. A description was given of the roan horse he was riding when last seen. I had once dispatched Lieutenant Searles with nine mounted men and instructed him to hide his men and horses in a cornfield very near the church. As soon as darkness came on, he moved with great care, got his men into hiding, and on Sunday afternoon the roan horse and rider appeared. The horse was tied to a fence. As soon as the man entered the church, a dash was made for the horse. Having secured it, they made for the church door to capture the rider. He, however, being alert, jumped out of a window and escaped into the cornfield, where all track of him was soon lost. The lieutenant and his men returned to Anderson with the captured horse.

The next morning, just as the guard had been mounted for the day and the men assigned to remain at the guardhouse had stacked arms, Jolly rode up alone, saying, "Tell your colonel that unless he delivers my horse that his men stole from me at the meetinghouse on Sunday, I will kill him and every man in his regiment before they can get out of this country." He wheeled his horse and rode away. The sergeant of the guard commanded the men to take their weapons and fire at Jolly. Jolly lay over the neck of his horse, which was running at full speed, and escaped. The next day, however, the horse was returned. He did get his horse back.

The Milam County, Texas Cameron Herald reported on March 15, 1934, that when Jolly left Anderson, he had twenty-three notches on his gun, and it was said that he killed at least a dozen Yankees on his way to Texas.

He more than made good five times five. This number of slain Yankees did not include the Negroes he killed. A large number were killed in different sections of the country. Jolly sometimes wore the uniform of a federal soldier, and this helped him on different occasions. Among the Negroes killed was one near Pendleton. The man met Jolly in the road and, seeing the Yankee uniform, offered to direct him to the home of some white people where he was told he could secure jewelry and gold. In other words, “I’ll lead you there. You can steal from them and kill them.” Here Jolly put another notch on his gun.

Jolly's Methods and the Jones Company

Like most Southerners of the Reconstruction, Jolly had no particular love for the freed blacks who guided Union troops or officials to the silver, gold, horses, chickens, and cows of Southern people. You have to understand something: in those days, to lose those animals meant slow starvation for you and your family. In other words, the man intended the death of the white people. Manson had no particular good option about killing the man who was going to make the white starve. Manson had no mercy upon them because they had no mercy upon the Southern people. The Bible says in James 2:13, “For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy.” The Yankees were showing no mercy toward the Southern people, and so Manson showed no mercy toward them.

Several contemporary accounts mention that Manson Jolly donned Yankee uniforms, sometimes quite frequently, which enabled him to get close to Union soldiers and capture them many times. Manson always said, very dryly, that he turned these federal soldiers over to General Green, which was the forest. That meant he simply took them out and killed them.

At Browns Ferry, three Yankee garrison soldiers were stationed to guard stolen cotton. When the Yankees stole cotton, they sometimes simply took it, and sometimes took it legally by setting the taxes so high that the owners had to give it up. A whole wharf was loaded with stolen cotton, guarded by three Yankees. When Jolly saw what was happening, he went down, killed all three, and

turned the cotton over to the parties from whom it had been stolen. At Bowman's blacksmith shop, near Providence Church in Rockmills Township, Jolly found two Yankees who had stolen horses from some of his relatives.

He disarmed both and marched them ten miles to Sourwood Spring Schoolhouse, where a singing was in progress. There he called for S. F. McConnell, the father of Sam and Bob McConnell of the city. After a short conversation, he left Mr. McConnell and went on to his mother's house, located near where Dr. Hutchinson lives. Taking his two prisoners into the woods, he killed them and then turned the stolen horses over to those who had lost them.

Now, if you think that's bad, you have to remember something: in those days, if you stole a horse, you were hanged. It was the death penalty anyhow; it didn't matter who you were. Manson simply executed them.

Manson was adept at killing Yankees. In fact, he was so adept that the reward for him started at a thousand dollars in gold and went up to ten thousand dollars in gold—not greenbacks, gold. There were very few willing to try to claim it, and none ever did.

One story shows the boldness, brashness, and courage of Manson Jolly and some of the men associated with him. A banquet was given by the commandant of the Yankee forces in Anderson, South Carolina. Manson Jolly and a young fellow named Simpson, who also had a thousand-dollar reward on his head, went to the banquet. They then went up to the Yankee commandant and applied for the thousand-dollar reward in gold.

They said, "We want to turn ourselves in. We want to get the money." When the Yankee commandant began to think that they might really be the men, Governor Orr happened to be there. Knowing who they were, Governor Orr started laughing and told the commandant, "These boys are making a fool out of you. They're just playing a part. Jolly and Simpson would never come up here like this." The commandant turned away, and Governor Orr said, "If you don't get out of here and get out of danger, I'll whip you myself." They turned around and left. Then Governor Orr told the commandant, "While you folks have taken everything that

we've had in this day and time, at least you can't take all the good dinners we had before the war."

A group of young men who rode with Manson called themselves the Jones Company. I do not know why they chose that name. These boys gathered to fight the thievery and injustices perpetrated by the Yankees. The Reverend Dr. J. B. Adger, in My Life and Times, tells of the Jones Company and the Yankee thieves.

Remember, here was a man who was there. He said, "When old Mrs. North's carriage horses were taken from the harness and the old lady left sitting in the coach in the road—I mean, they just stole them while she was out in the wilderness and left her there—Manson Jolly, Mike Dixon, and one of the Simpson boys went after the Yanks and got them, but lost them over the road by Sandy Springs than a wooded country." I wonder how they lost them. These same Yanks took watches and jewelry from refugees at Bosco Bell near Pendleton, where Dr. Adger then lived and Clint Summers now lives.

The Yankee leader, Allison Chapman, had stolen a fine young mare. As he mounted her, his short carbine swung around; the hammer struck the saddle's pommel, and the muzzle jabbed him under the chin. He fell dead in the yard. The pastor said, "Most of the jewelry, including the fine, handsome old watch that he now wears, was recovered because of that." In other words, the Yankee had stolen the jewelry from the good preacher.

Manson was so successful at killing Yankees that a whole regiment—not merely a company—looked for him. He was not afraid to die, but the Yankees constantly harassed his mother and sisters. They staked out the farm twenty-four hours a day, raided the house, stole whatever they wanted, and left the family no privacy.

Departure to Texas and Death

Finally, Manson thought that, to give them relief, he would get out of the country for a while. Perhaps they would leave his family alone if he were gone. Manson and a few friends decided to go to Texas and start their lives over. An account of his leaving

Anderson, South Carolina, appeared in the Anderson Independent Mail in April 1981. Written by Steve Bionotto, “The Legend of Manson Jolly” described what happened before he left Anderson. On Sunday, January 29, 1866, so the story goes—although Manson actually left in September—

Probably the month was wrong. On Sunday, January 29, 1866, Jolly rode quietly into Anderson on his favorite horse, Dixie. A few blocks down the street from the camp of the Union troops, he reined up. Taking a deep breath, he pulled his hat down over his red hair and put a pistol in each hand. With a traditional rebel yell piercing the calm day, he galloped pell-mell through the camp, both pistols blazing at anything that moved. The troops, understandably, were stunned into virtual statues until the yelling apparition disappeared into the protecting woods, leaving shocked and wounded Union soldiers in his wake. Isn't that amazing?

In other words, if he was going to leave, he was going to leave in style. He did go to Texas, traveling through Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. His companions included Walter Sargent, who had helped him harass the Yankees; F. D. Townsend; Thomas Herbert Williams; and a cousin, John M. Jolly. They settled in Milam County, Texas, which was populated by many southerners. When Manson arrived on Dixie, he had a great deal of money made on the way to Texas by trading and selling horses. Undoubtedly, the horses probably belonged to some of the missing Yankee soldiers they never found. Jolly and his three companions became well-known families in the region, with many present-day descendants.

They started a farm, since he was a farmer, and built a small farmhouse. Manson named it Bachelor's Hall because all of them were bachelors. In a letter to his sister, he referred to it as Delectable Hall. These men worked long, hard hours, raising cotton and wheat. Manson even worked for a gin; he was no stranger to hard work. On April 16, 1867, he wrote his sister: "I'm more pleased with Texas, but these dang people here. Society is bad. They have no use for preachers out here."

Again, on July 29, he gave another appraisal of the Texas frontier: "The longer I stay, the better satisfied I am. But I say,

darn to the most of these people, it has become a general custom among the lower class to use snuff. How distasteful it is in my sight to see them push forward a box of snuff and ask all around to dip with them."

“Corn is selling for fifty cents per bushel, flour ten dollars a barrel, bacon twelve and a half cents a pound, beef from one to three cents a pound.” Later, in a letter to his sister, he said, “I’m strongly in the notion of getting married as a bachelor’s wife is the most miserable of all living creatures.” So he carried out his strong notion. The following year, in 1868, he married 19-year-old Elizabeth Mildred Smith, daughter of Captain John Gray Smith of South Carolina. His good friend, Walter Sargent, married the other Smith daughter as well. Thus, the friends became brothers-in-law.

On July 12, 1869, when all seemed to be going well, John M. Jolly, the cousin, had to write Manson’s mother. She had lost her husband before the war and all of her sons in the war except Manson. Now she was to lose him. John M. Jolly wrote his aunt: “Dear Aunt, it is under very sad circumstances that I write to you. It becomes my sad duty to inform you that Manson is dead.

“He was drowned on last Thursday evening, the 8th. The circumstances were these. We’ve had the highest rise of Little River that has been known for years. Manson was working on a house for himself, which was on the opposite side of a small creek from where he was living. In returning from his work in the evening, he attempted to swim the creek on his horse, and he and the horse both drowned. He had swam the creek three times the same day on the same horse. There were three men and a boy with him, but could render him no assistance. The water was 12 to 15 feet deep where he drowned, in consequence of which his body could not be gotten immediately. It was about 18 hours before the body was found. In consequence of the high water, I could not be notified until the next day.

“Then I had to ride 30 miles to get through as I was six and six miles when I started. He was buried on last Saturday, the 10th.” John Jolly concluded: “Manson had made friends since we’ve been here. And could he lived his future so far as human knowledge extends would have been bright. I feel as if I’ve lost a dear brother.

Dear Aunt, I hope that you will be able to bear up under this trouble. I shall be glad to hear from you and will take pleasure in writing to you at any time. I am, as ever, your nephew, John M. Jolly."

Manson was building the new house because his young wife was about five months pregnant. In November 1869, she gave birth to a daughter, Ella Manson Jolly. Ella lived to be sixty-one, mostly in Fort Worth, where she is buried. She married a banker and had a rather decent life.

An obituary in an Anderson County, South Carolina, newspaper, covering 1841 to 1882, stated: "The death of Manson Jolly will be received with regret by many friends of this bold and daring Confederate soldier. We learned that a private letter has been received stating that Manson Jolly was drowned on the 8th of July near his home in Texas. He was building a residence on the opposite side of the creek from where he lived, and he crossed over on horseback several times during the day.

"The stream was greatly swollen. Attempting to cross for the third or fourth time, he was carried with his horse down the creek, and in the struggle which ensued, both were drowned. Mr. Jolly had been married about one year and leaves a young wife, the daughter of a former citizen of Anderson. The thrilling exploits and adventures of Manson Jolly in this section of the country, immediately after the war was closed, are fresh in the recollection of all.

Legacy and Biblical Application

"His name was a terror for a long time to the garrison of the United States soldiers, especially the volunteer white and colored regiments stationed in this place."

Some time ago, David J. Watson, a South Carolina man, retired engineer, Clemson University worker for thirty-one years, and leader in the area's historical society, bought the run-down Jolly log home near Anderson. Watson says that about seventy-five years after the war, the old well on the farm was cleaned out. It

contained numerous skeletons and about a peck of corroded military uniform buttons, all marked U.S.

You know what a peck is? A peck is eight quarts, or two gallons. Two gallons of buttons? How many men did he throw in that well? Watson says it apparently was one of Manson Jolly's disposal spots for Yankee soldiers. Maybe there is something to the saying, "All is well, all is well."

When you read about individuals like this, you cannot help but say, these men were unique, courageous, and fearless. The Bible says you reap what you sow.

And in Psalm 9, I believe it is, God said, “The pit that the wicked dig, they shall fall in themselves. And God shall bring it down upon the pate of their own heads.” May I tell you, Haman will be hanged from his own gallows. Those that persecute and hate the people of God will reap exactly what they sow. Inevitably, invariably, in time and history, God will send an avenger because vengeance belongs to Him. In His day, in His time, His hour, He will see that justice prevails.

What did Psalm 34 say? “When thou seest a wicked, fret not.” Why? Because in a moment, they shall be cut off. I’m here to tell you, I’d rather be with Jesus Christ and His people and live righteously and holy than to be the richest man in the world and have all the power in the world and yet without Christ. The wickedness that we see in our land today shall not escape the righteous judgment of God.

He shall, in His time, send His sword and destroy the wicked. I look at Atlanta, Georgia. All I can think of is, where in the world is General Sherman when you need him most? Look at Washington, D.C. But God knows how to take care of the wicked, and He will do it in His time. My prayer is that God will give us men: men of courage, men of character, men of holiness, fearless men who stand for that which is right. It doesn’t matter if 40 regiments are against us; we still need to stand for the truth and principles of liberty and freedom.

CHAPTER 9

Feelings or Commandments

August 15, 2008

Feelings vs. Commandments

Introduction: Two Lifestyles from Ephesians 4

The Apostle Paul writes, "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." I want you to note the contrast.

"But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

What the Apostle Paul gives us in this brief passage is two distinct lifestyles. He illustrates what it is to walk according to feelings and, in another instance, what it is to walk according to commandments. If I were to ask this simple question, "What is the chief duty of man?" everyone in this room can answer it. The answer, of course, is that the chief duty of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Defining Feelings, Attitude, and Behavior

In order to glorify God, we must learn to live biblically. If you and I learn to live biblically, then we must know the difference between feeling, attitude, and behavior. Each one of those things is totally different. If you understand the difference, you will be able to discern between root and fruit, or between cause and symptoms.

One of our problems as Christians is that we spend most of our time picking fruit. We spend most of our time dealing with symptoms when we should be laying the axe to the root of the tree and dealing with the cause. We spend all of our time, like the Apostle Paul says, beating the air, and we never accomplish anything. Consequently, we fail miserably in glorifying God.

In reality, there are only two basic lifestyles: the feeling-oriented life and the commandment-oriented life. Throughout each day, each of us, consciously or unconsciously, follows one of those lifestyles. We either obey one or the other. These two lifestyles involve patterns of lust or love. They are oriented either toward the desires of self or toward the Word of God. They acknowledge two different sources of authority: one, self; the other, the Bible. They focus upon two goals, one temporary and the other eternal. They acknowledge two masters, either Satan or God, and they offer two ways of handling problems.

One way involves running, covering up, lying, deceiving, and blame-shifting. The other involves facing the problem, confessing and speaking the truth, and assuming personal responsibility. Each lifestyle brings about its own results: either bondage to chaos or freedom, structure, and eternal joy.

In a word, the lifestyles I am talking about are either humanism or theism. Humanism is the philosophy and worldview that posits man as the center of the universe and the center of all good. It elevates man, glorifies man, and, in essence, deifies man. Theism, on the other hand, places God at the center. It seeks to elevate God and to put God in His proper place, on His throne, where He rules, guides, directs, and orders all things. It seeks to bow to Him and subjugate all things to His dominion and His commands.

In order to know how to live biblically, you have to distinguish between feelings, attitude, and behavior. Before getting started, consider these definitions. Feeling simply refers to the perception of a bodily state as pleasant or unpleasant. Every one of you has said, "I feel bad," "I feel tired," or "I feel sick." Feelings may vary in kind or intensity, but basically there are only two types of feelings: good and bad. We have muscular or visceral feelings. For instance, I have a vertebrae pressing on a nerve, and every now and then it shoots a pain right down my leg, right in that muscle. That is muscular. That is visceral. I know it is there.

But the other is emotional. Emotional responses are usually bodily responses, which I am going to explain in relation to self-judgments in just a moment. Do you realize that we have become so feeling-oriented in this world that we cannot even think straight? Whenever there is a problem or a question, inevitably someone is going to say, “Well, how do you feel about it?” Not, “What do you think should be done?” or, “What do you think the answer is?” but, “How do you feel about it?”

We are so feeling-oriented that we always use our feelings for excuses. For instance, if your pastor asks, “Why were you not in church last Sunday?” you say, “Well, I didn’t feel like going.” “Did you pray?” “I just didn’t feel like praying.” “Did you study your Bible?” “I just didn’t feel like studying my Bible.” “Why in the world did you hit that man?” “I just felt like striking out.” You notice that everything is about our feelings.

We carry feelings so far and become so confused. I have heard people say, “I feel stupid. I feel inferior. I feel inadequate.” Let me tell you something: stupidity, inferiority, and inadequacy are not feelings. They are judgments that you make about yourself. You

may feel sad, bad, and angry because of the attitudes that you have concerning yourself. But, thank God, those are not feelings. If stupidity, inferiority, and inadequacy were feelings, there would not be much you could do about them.

On the one hand, you really cannot control your feelings. You say, "Yes, Brother John, I can control my feelings." Fine. The next time you have a fever, or diarrhea, try to control it. You just cannot do it. But if stupidity and inadequacy are judgments that you make about yourself, causing bad emotional responses, then once you change your behavior and your judgment about yourself, you can change your feelings. While we are on the subject of feelings, let me cover something very quickly.

One of the biggest complaints I have heard from Christians most of my life is, "Brother Weaver, there are times that I just don't feel saved." Have you ever heard anyone say that? There is a good reason why you do not feel saved: salvation is not a feeling. Salvation is an accomplished fact, wrought and brought about through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. Salvation may indeed affect our emotions; that is true. But the fact of the matter is that salvation is not a feeling. It is an accomplished fact. It has been done, worked out, and finished by the Lord Jesus Christ.

You cannot feel facts. The world is out there. Feel it. Our Lord said, "The truth shall set you free." Feel that fact. The Bible is the Word of God. Feel that fact. I may be bald-headed. Feel that fact. You cannot feel facts. But feelings, whether good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, cannot affect the fact. The fact is that Jesus Christ has accomplished salvation, and regardless of what your feelings are, that is still true. Feelings are basically of two kinds, good and bad.

An attitude is that combination of presuppositions, beliefs, opinions, and convictions that makes up your habitual stance at any given time toward a person, a subject, or an act. An attitude is a mindset that strongly influences your behavior. That is why the Bible says, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." That is why Scripture says in Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Let me tell you about a cartoon I saw years ago. It was one of my favorite cartoons to show how strong attitudes really are. The pastor was walking down the hallway with another man, undoubtedly another preacher, showing him the church building. There was an open door, and the guest was looking through it. Inside, two men were rolling on the floor. Their eyes were black.

Their hair had been pulled out, their clothes were torn very obviously, and their fists were folded. They were fighting. The pastor looked at his guest and said, "Oh, never mind them. They're just having their weekly discussion on the doctrine of election." You understand what I mean about an attitude. An attitude is a mindset that does indeed affect your behavior.

Thirdly, behavior is the conduct of a whole person that may be judged by the law of God. When I say behavior is the conduct of a whole person, I am not saying that behavior is the result of some little gland. No. It is the result of a whole person, and that whole person may be judged by the law of God. This teaches us that man is answerable and accountable to God. Your conduct may be responsible or irresponsible, yet it still may be judged according to the law of God.

Remember feelings, attitude, and behavior, because there is the feeling-oriented life and the commandment-oriented life. In Genesis chapter 2, when God created Adam and placed him in the garden, He placed him under a commandment-oriented life. It was God's prerogative to command, and it was Adam's responsibility to obey. Genesis 2:16 says, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." The word "commanded" literally means to put under an oath or to put under a charge. Simply stated, God gave Adam a commandment, placed him under an oath, and gave him a charge. Adam agreed under oath that he would obey God.

Sin Makes Us Desire-Oriented

If he obeyed, he lived. If he disobeyed, he died. There could not be any misunderstanding: "Here you are. Here are my commandments. You obey. You live." Genesis chapter 3 records what happened next.

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 3:1-6 (KJV)

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing or determining good and evil." "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Note the words in verse 6: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, when she saw that it was pleasant to the eyes, she took and she ate and she gave to her husband." There is one word missing in verse 6. You know what that word is? It is the word "commandment." Nowhere does she remember God's commandment. At this stage in Genesis chapter 3 and verse 6, it is no longer about God and His Word.

It is now all about Eve: her thoughts, her feelings, her desires, her wants, her will, and her way. She took, and she gave to Adam.

There are many sins involved in Genesis 3 and verse 6. I have an entire message just on verse 6. But one of the greatest sins Adam and Eve committed in this passage was that they set themselves above the Word of God. They gave themselves priority over the Word of God. They placed their feelings, desires, and needs above God. It did not matter what God commanded or wanted. They were not looking after God; they were looking after themselves. They wanted what they wanted, giving in to their desires and emotions. They could say to God, "Down with God, kick God off His throne. It's my feelings, my emotions, my needs, and my wants that I want to elevate and place upon the throne. I'm going to do

what I want to do, and as far as I'm concerned, God can kiss my foot."

That was their sin, first and foremost. They chose to satisfy their desires rather than obey the command of God. Consequently, all their posterity have followed their example. By nature, we'd rather please ourselves than God. Note the impact the fall had upon man: feelings became all-important. When God came and walked in the garden and said, "Adam, where art thou?" what did Adam and Eve do?

They ran and hid themselves. Why did they run and hide? Why did they cover up their sins? Why did they not come out to God and say, "Oh God, I'm so sorry. I've sinned against you. I've violated your law. I've broken your commandments. Oh God, have mercy upon me"? No, they did not do that. They ran and hid. You know why? They were going to protect their feelings. They did not want to be embarrassed, hurt, or uncomfortable.

The average man and woman today had rather deny their sins than confess them. Why? Because it is not nice; it is uncomfortable and uneasy. Here is another effect of the fall upon our feelings: they began to blame-shift. What did Adam say? "It's the woman thou gavest to be with me." What did the woman say? "It was the serpent." They shifted blame, and both indirectly blamed God: "God, had you not created the serpent, none of this would have happened anyhow." How do we act today? Exactly the same way.

We are not willing to face up to our responsibility or acknowledge our sin. We blame everything on everybody else: “It’s those boys my children run with.” “It’s that person down the street.” We say, “I could be the best husband in the world if it just wasn’t for my wife.” “I could be the best wife in the world if it wasn’t for my husband.” “I could be the best pastor in the world if it wasn’t for my congregation.”

Everybody blames everybody else. We never look at ourselves and say, “Look, it’s me.” No. That is because we put feelings first.

Now, let me continue to clarify this. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Joshua, chapters 6 and 7. You should know the story of how God sent the children of Israel to destroy Jericho. Notice what

God says in Joshua 6:17-18: “And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in her house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.”

God said that all the gold and silver in it would be dedicated to Him. Everything else was to be utterly, completely, and absolutely destroyed. Everything was under a ban and under a curse. “Don’t touch it.”

You know the story. In chapter 7, a man named Achan found some things, took them, and hid them under his tent. Then Joshua sent some men to Ai. They told Joshua, “Don’t make all Israel fight and work. It’s a small town. Just send three or four thousand up there. We can take care of that.” But the men of Ai defeated them and killed thirty-six of them. When they returned, Joshua fell to the ground and said, “Oh God, what in the world is Israel going to do when she turns her back upon her enemies?” He began crying to God, and God said, “Get up. Get up.”

There was no reason to cry or pray. Joshua said, “The problem is there’s sin in the camp, and unless that sin is dealt with, here’s what God says: ‘Neither will I be with you anymore.’” Joshua then had the tribes come before him. The tribe of Judah was taken, then the family of Achan, and finally Achan himself.

In Joshua chapter 7, beginning with verse 18, we read: “And he brought his household, man by man; and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me.”

Achan answered Joshua, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the

midst of my tent, and the silver under it." Joshua sent messengers to the tent, and they found the things hidden there.

Notice what Achan confessed: "When I saw." Then, "I coveted." And finally, "I took them." That is exactly what happened to Eve—the same lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. Achan gave in to his feelings and desires. He wanted the silver, the Babylonian scarlet, and the gold.

It did not matter what God said or commanded. God had said, "Don't touch it lest you become a curse and bring a curse upon the camp of Israel." Achan effectively replied, "My feelings and desires are more important than your commandment. I want them, and I am going to take them."

Adam and Eve had proven that one cannot sin against God and escape judgment, and Achan verified that truth. Achan was put to death, and his whole family was put to death with him. Why were they put to death? If the things were hidden under a tent, they had to be party to it; they had to know about it.

Moreover, it was Achan's actions that caused thirty-six Israelites to be killed. Achan not only lost his life; he lost his family and everything that he had. Why? Because he wanted his desires and feelings fulfilled.

Here is another illustration of this same truth: sin makes us desire- or feeling-oriented. Surely, when you talk about Samson, someone as strong and powerful as Samson could certainly resist his desires and feelings. Yet notice what happened in Judges 14: "And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well."

Samson had gone down to the Philistines and seen this beautiful Philistine woman. He came back and told his father, "I want you to

get her for me, for she pleaseth me well." Do you understand that every Israelite knew God's law in this matter? God had forbidden intermarriage with the heathen, and especially with the Philistines. All you have to do is read Exodus 34 and Deuteronomy 7.

When Samson said, "I have this Philistine woman, and I want you to get her for me," his father warned him that there were plenty of good-looking Israelitish women. He pointed him toward his own tribe and questioned why he would go to the Philistines for a wife. But Samson insisted: "Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well."

Let me tell you what that is in the Hebrew: "Get her for me, for it's agreeable to me. It's good in my eyes. It's what I want." Note that Samson was not only violating known commandments in the Word of God; he was also violating the fifth commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother." Samson never got to marry this woman.

She was given to his best friend, or to a man that he used as his friend. Samson did not even learn from this. He kept messing around until he found another Philistine woman in Judges 16, by the name of Delilah. Look at Judges 16:21: "But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house." Here, the mighty man of God, the man who had the power of God upon him and was used of God in so many ways, has now lost his sight, lost his ministry, and ultimately loses his life. You know why?

Because he gave in to his feelings. He gave in to his desires. He wanted what he wanted. It did not matter what God commanded. It seems as if we never learn. It does not matter how many illustrations we have in the Bible; it seems as if we never learn. Most people live on their feelings. It is a clever wile of Satan to tempt men to think that they cannot do what God requires simply because they do not feel like doing it.

Think about that. God requires you to study His Word, and yet you say, “I just don’t feel like it.” God requires you to pray: “I just don’t feel like it.” God says, “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together,” as a man or woman: “Well, I just don’t feel like it.” It is not that we are sick or hurt. We just do not feel like doing it. But let me tell you something else: not only does he tempt us not to do what God commands because we think we do not feel like doing it—

On the other hand, he tempts us to give in to our feelings and desires. Consequently, we have adopted the motto, “If it feels good, do it.” The opposite is, “If it does not feel good, do not do it, no matter what God commands.” Most people are so overcome with their feelings that they cannot separate their feelings from reality. Consider how many divorces there have been in America—divorces among Christians.

Most men and women, when offering a reason for divorce, say, “I no longer have feelings for my wife,” or, “I no longer have feelings for my husband.” Isn’t that amazing? You know what God says in Ephesians 5:25? “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” You are commanded to love your wife. Feelings have nothing to do with it. Thank God there are feelings involved between husbands and wives, but feelings have nothing to do with the command. God commands you to love.

I had a man come into my office under the pretense that he wanted counseling. Most people, when they come for counseling, really do not want counsel. What they want is for you to put your stamp of approval upon what they have already decided to do.

This gentleman was a professing Christian, and he told me that he was going to divorce his wife. I asked, “Why?” He said, “Well, I don’t love her anymore. I have no feelings for her.” I said, “The Scripture says, ‘Husbands, love your wives.’ God commands you to love your wife. You must love her.” He said, “Well, I just can’t love her as a wife.”

I asked, “Are you sure?” He said, “Oh, yes, I’m sure. I have no feelings for her.” I said, “At least she is your closest neighbor, since

she lives in the house with you, wouldn't you say?" He answered, "Well, yes." I said, "The Bible says, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' So you are still required to love her." He said, "I can't even love her as a neighbor." I asked, "Would you say that she is your enemy?" He replied, "Oh, yes, sir. She is my enemy." "Good," I said. "God says, 'Love your enemies.' You can't get out of it." He answered, "Well, I don't feel." I said, "I don't care how you feel. God requires you to love your wife." When people are encouraged to follow their feelings rather than the Word of God, it is not only sin, dear folks; it is treachery, treason against the sovereign God of heaven and earth, and treason against His law.

As Christians, we do have a choice. We can either follow that feeling-oriented life and do what we desire, or we can follow the commandments of God. Hebrews 11 gives us a good illustration. The Bible says in Hebrews 11:24, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He would have been in line to inherit the throne. He would have been a Pharaoh. He could have had all the riches, all the glory, and all the power of Egypt.

Notice what the Bible says: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." He had a choice, did he not? He could be top dog, with all power and authority and money and everything he wanted, fulfilling the lust of his flesh and the desires of his flesh like no one else could ever do. Or he could choose to suffer with the people of God. He chose to suffer with the people of God.

Here is why: "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He said, "I'd rather have the reproach of Jesus Christ than to be the next Pharaoh." Is that not amazing? You do not have to have a feeling-oriented life. However, most people give in to their feelings. When you give in to your feelings, you always end up in despair, desperation, discouragement, and

depression. What we have to learn is never, ever to make decisions based upon despair or doubt.

Whenever we know that an action is biblical and scriptural, then we move with confidence. There is a verse you need to memorize, at least part of it. Romans 14:23 says, “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” If you cannot do something in faith toward God, you had better not do it. So when in doubt, don't.

It is always easier to change a no to a yes than it is a yes to a no. So God says, whenever there is a doubt, do not do it. Give God the benefit of the doubt. But once you determine that something is biblical and scriptural, move forward with confidence, regardless of the consequences.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew it was biblical and right not to bow to that image in the plain of Dura, and they moved forward. They did not know they were going to be thrown into the fiery furnace. But when they found out that was their end, they did not back down or say, “Give me a minute to reconsider this. Let me change my mind.” Regardless of the consequences, they stuck with what was biblical and right. Sin always makes us desire- and feeling-oriented.

Behavior Determines Feelings

Secondly, understand that behavior determines feelings. It is important to understand the connection between behavior and feelings. Feelings are never to lead; they are always to follow. God has ordained that if you do what is right, you are going to feel right. If you do what is wicked and bad, you are going to feel bad. Feelings follow actions; they are never to lead us. Good feelings are the result of obedience. Bad feelings are the result of disobedience.

Look in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 4, beginning with verse 3. Genesis 4:3: “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain,

Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Cain and Abel both brought sacrifices to God. Cain brought the fruit of the field.

Abel brought that which God required. Consequently, Abel's sacrifice was accepted and Cain's was rejected. Undoubtedly, Abel was quite happy that God had respect to his offering and received it. Would he not be happy? God was pleased, and Abel was blessed. But Cain offered the fruit of the ground. God rejected it, and immediately, notice what happens: he became wroth and his countenance fell. Cain became angry; his countenance fell. Simply stated, he became morose, depressed, angry, and anxious.

His bad feelings stemmed from his wicked conduct. His bad feelings came from his wicked behavior.

Now God says in verse 6 unto Cain, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?" And the Lord said, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" In other words, "Cain, you want me to be pleased with your sacrifice? You bring what I require. If you bring what I require, fine, I'll accept yours. If you don't, then I will not accept it. It's just that simple." Cain's depression and feelings of despair came from the fact of his wicked conduct, and God refused his offering. Abel came in obedience, and God was pleased, and so was Abel.

I've heard so many people talk about nervous breakdowns. I'm going to tell you there is no such thing as a nervous breakdown. You say, "Well, yes, there is, Brother Weaver. I had one." No. There's no such thing as a nervous breakdown. Your nerves are working all too well. That is the problem. It's not a nervous breakdown; it's a foundation breakup. We keep sinning against God and disobeying, and pretty soon God gets our back against the wall. We cannot go any further, the way we handle problems no longer works, and we go to pieces. It's not our nerves. It's our behavior. It's our wickedness. And when people have these quote-unquote emotional problems, they try to relieve them with drugs, alcohol, and all kinds of pills.

And you know what they are doing? They are dealing with symptoms. They are not dealing with the root or the cause. People feel bad because of bad behavior. People feel good, on the other hand, because of good or right behavior.

Let me show you this. I am not going to ask you to do it because I do not want you to, quote-unquote, feel bad. But I could make every one of you in this room tonight start feeling sickly and nauseated. You say, "How?" If I were to ask you to think of the most embarrassing, hurtful, or devastating incident in your life, and you began dwelling on it and calling it back to mind, the next thing you know, your stomach would start doing this all over again. Why? Because you are reliving all those emotions from that bad incident. Do you understand that when you live right, you have good feelings?

Look in your Bibles to 1 Peter, chapter 3, verse 10: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good. Let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Go back to verse 10: "For he that will love life, and see good days." In other words, you want good days? You want to feel good? You want to live good? What does God say? "Let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil." The word "eschew" is an old English word. Do you know what it literally means? It means to spit it out. You cannot stomach it; you cannot take it. So He says, "Let him spit out evil, and do good. Let him seek peace, and ensue it." Why? "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but his face is against them that do evil."

Notice verse 16: "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." Do you realize a good conscience stems from obedience?

It does not matter what people say about you, as long as you know that you have done that which is right. God is saying, "If you

want to have a good life and good feelings in your life, then you obey me." Understand that feelings are never to lead; they are always to follow.

Let me give you an illustration and show you how important this truth is. This has happened to every one of us. We have awakened one morning and simply do not feel good. We are not sick or hurt; something is just not right. We lie in bed and say, "I do not feel like getting out of this bed, but I have work to do. I have this to do and that to do. If I do not get those things done, I am going to be so far behind I cannot see straight. I know what I need to do. I do not feel like it, and I do not feel good, but I am going to get up, get out of bed, go to work, and start doing that which I know needs to be done."

You begin fulfilling your responsibility. In about an hour, it dawns on you: "You know, I feel good. I do not feel bad." You have good feelings. But suppose you lie in bed and say, "I am just not getting out of this bed today," and remain there. Your husband comes home and asks, "Where is my supper?" You answer, "I did not feel like getting out of bed. I did not feel like cooking." He asks, "Where are my clean clothes for work tomorrow?" You reply, "I did not feel like ironing."

Next thing you know, there is an argument. Next thing you know, both of you are going to bed mad. Next thing you know, you wake up in the morning and really do not feel like getting out of bed because you are so far behind. You do not know where to start. And the next thing you know, you are thoroughly, totally, completely discouraged and depressed. You know why? Because you gave in to your feelings. Feelings are never to lead. They are always to follow.

The Commandment-Oriented Life is the Godly Life

Now, I want you to understand this last point: the commandment-oriented life is the godly life. Let me ask you a question. Do not answer this out loud. What is salvation? I know what you are thinking: salvation is being saved from sin and from judgment. That is partly correct. But you could say that being saved from sin and judgment is also simply a byproduct of

salvation. Salvation is more than negatives. Salvation is a positive. What would really be a broad, encompassing statement concerning salvation?

Look in 1 Peter 3 and verse 18. Watch what happens: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” Go back and look at that verse again: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.” Why? Why did Christ die? “That he might bring us to God.” Not just to save us from our sin. Yes, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” That is just one of the blessings of being saved. But when God saves us through Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ brings us back to God. What is the significance of that phrase, “that he might bring us to God”?

Do you not remember in Genesis 3, when God created Adam, He placed him under that commandment-oriented life? He put him under charge. He put him under oath. And what did Adam do? Adam sinned. When he sinned, what did he do? He began running from God and hiding from God. And now what does God do in salvation? God has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, who has become our substitute, who has become our sacrifice, who has died in our place, and He saves us. Listen, we come by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. When we bow the knee to Jesus Christ and acknowledge Him as Lord and Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ takes us by the hand, brings us to the Father, and says, “Father, I have brought another one back.” And guess what?

We now bow to Him, and like David, we say, "O how love I thy law." We're no longer running from God; we're running to God. We no longer hide from Him; we want Him. We no longer want to please ourselves; we want to please Him. We are no longer in rebellion to Him; we bow to Him. He died to bring us to God.

God, when He saves us, places us again under a commandment-oriented life. He's delivered us from the feeling- or the desire-oriented life. In John 14:21, our Lord says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Note, "He that hath my

commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." In verse 24, He says, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

In 1 John 5:2, John writes, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." Wait. Stop. "We know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep his commandments." How do I know that I love Jim Nelson? Is it because I can go up to him and hug his neck and start crying and say, "Oh brother Jim, I love you, I love you, I love you," and have all these sentimental feelings? No. If I were a wicked man, I could go up to him, hug his neck, tell him how much I loved him, and while I'm telling him that, steal his wallet. It doesn't matter how much I tell him I love him if I'm stealing from him. How do I know that I love him? How do I know that I love the brethren? Here's how: "By this we know that we love the children of God."

When we love God, we keep his commandments. As long as I honor Jim Nelson, I keep God's law toward him. I respect his wife, his family, his property, and his children. I treat him the way God commands me to treat him. I love him whether I ever tell him I love him or not, whether I ever get emotional or not. I love him because I'm keeping God's law toward him.

How do I know that I love God? Here it is: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." My life is constantly being brought into greater conformity to the commandment-oriented life. I'm not running around on my wife. I'm not stealing. I'm not cussing and lying. I'm not defrauding. I'm not trying to be dishonest. I am bringing my life into greater conformity to the Word of God by the grace of God and by the power of the Holy Spirit. "This is the love of God," He said, "that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

What does that mean? It doesn't grieve me that I can't go out and kill somebody. It doesn't grieve me that I can't run out and commit adultery. It doesn't grieve me that I can't go steal and

defraud. I don't want to do those things. Why? Because God has saved me and placed me under a commandment-oriented life.

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." How do I know that I know God? God is enabling me and empowering me to keep His commandments. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Where does that leave most church people? Where does that leave professing Christendom? The Bible says, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." I was preaching in Iowa, and the services had just started. I had just gotten up and made some opening statements, and a whole gang of motorcycle riders came in and sat on the back row.

They had all the black leather and log chains hanging everywhere. When they came in, I backed up and repeated what I had already said, making sure they heard it, and I preached on salvation. When I finished, the leader of the motorcycle gang, a big, burly man probably six foot four and 250 pounds, said, "Preacher, I want to talk to you." I said, "Sure, right here." "No," he said, "I want to talk to you alone."

We went down to the basement. He said, "I don't like what you said." I replied, "I'm sorry. What I said was truth, and it was the Bible." He told me that he had made a profession of faith as a little boy, then left God and the church. For the last fifteen years, he had been sleeping around with different women, getting drunk, and doing whatever he wanted to do. "And here you are telling me I'm not a Christian," he said. I answered, "You heard right."

He said the preacher under whom he had made his profession of faith told him he was saved. I said, "I don't care what he told you." By then, the other members of the motorcycle gang had come down and were surrounding me. He asked, "How can you say what you say?" I said, "Very simple," and turned to 1 John 2:4: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

I told him, "Sir, either you're a liar or God is, and I don't believe it's God." He said, "Thank you for being honest," and they left. I do not know what happened to him. But if the Word of God means anything, it means that God has saved us. When He saved us, He placed us back under a commandment-oriented life.

Do you remember what our Lord said in Luke 6:46? "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" The word "Lord," Kyrios in the Greek, means master, sovereign, boss, or owner. Jesus Christ is asking, "Why are you calling me boss, master, Lord, or sovereign if you're not going to obey me?"

In Proverbs chapter 1, God tells us about the rebellious who will not listen to Him, hear His word, or receive His instruction. But in Proverbs chapter 3, He says, “My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.”

Look in chapter 4: “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.” Then, in verse 4: “He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words. Keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.”

Psalm 119:9-11 asks, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?” The answer is “by taking heed thereto according to thy word.” The psalm continues: “With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Applications and Conclusion

As Christians, we may give in to our desires and feelings, or we may obey God. Every day, each of us must decide whether we will live a feeling-oriented life or a commandment-oriented life. If we want to prosper and be blessed of God, we must obey Him.

Obedience is not optional for the child of God; it is mandatory and necessary. It should also be given in loving submission and

humble gratefulness. God has saved us. I do not obey merely out of fear that God might strike me down. I know that God is just, but I obey because I want to please and honor Him. He is my heavenly Father; He has redeemed me, and I owe Him obedience. As Paul said, “Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

The principle that you need to understand is very simple: if we act right, we will feel right. If we act wickedly, we are going to feel horribly. Feelings are to follow; they never, ever lead. Our attitudes must be biblical in order for our conduct to be biblical. If we keep our attitudes and actions biblical, our feelings will always fall in line.

We are so feeling-oriented in this day and time that we have forgotten the principles of the Word of God. Remember this: principles do not change. Principles do not have funerals. Feelings change. You can feel good or bad, happy or sad, sick or well. If you live by your feelings, you are up and down, in and out, off and on. But if you follow the principles of the Word of God, they are always the same and never change, regardless of how you feel.

The commandment-oriented life is the only life for the child of God. It honors God, keeps down problems, and enables us to enjoy life. As our Lord said, "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil."

Let him spit it out. Let him do good. Let him seek peace, and pursue it.

When you wake up in the morning, it ought to be on your mind: “Lord, I want to obey Your commandments. I do not want to give in to my feelings or desires. I want to be biblical toward my wife or husband, my children, my pastor, my friends and relatives, in my job, and in every area of my life.”

Just as surely as you get out of bed and begin doing something, something will set you off, and you will have a tendency to revert to those feelings and desires. You will have to stop yourself and say,

“No, I am not going to do that. I am not going to sin against God. God has commanded me, and I shall obey Him.”

There is the feeling-oriented life or the commandment-oriented life. For the child of God, we must keep His commandments.

Father, we ask You to help us and teach us. The message is so simple, and yet so important. We have a choice as children of God, and we must, like Moses, choose to obey Thee and suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. We must learn to esteem the reproach of Christ greater than all the treasures of Egypt. Give us grace, Lord, always to obey Thee and bring our lives into greater conformity to the Word of God. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 10

Principles From the Heart of Dixie

April 26, 2009

Introduction: The Biblical South

I want to bring a message which I've entitled Principles from the Heart of Dixie. Principles from the Heart of Dixie. And if you have your Bibles, we're going to be looking at a number of scriptures today. If you don't, I'll quote them. That'll be fine. But as I talk about Principles from the Heart of Dixie, one of the most devastating truths that a Southerner will ever hear is that the word Dixie does not appear in the Bible. However, the word South does indeed appear in the Bible a number of times. And the truth of the matter is this, it seems as if good and godly men down through history have always preferred to live in the South. For instance, the Bible says this in Genesis 12 and verse 9, "And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south." In Genesis 13 and verse 1, the Bible said, "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south." And then, of

course, in Genesis 24, verse 62, the Bible says that Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi, for he dwelt in the south country.

And, of course, I hope that you remember that our Lord Jesus Christ was also from a southern tribe, Judah, in the southern kingdom. And so, very obviously, the word south is indeed predominant in the Bible. We can think of a number of reasons why we should love the South. And there is certainly nothing wrong or unbiblical in loving the place where you were born, bred, and raised. There are people who love the South who were not born here.

Why People Love the South

Some of you probably have seen the bumper sticker that some proudly display. It simply says this, "I was not born in the South, but I got here as soon as I could." Well, very obviously, a lot of people do love the South. Have you ever asked yourself why in the world do people want to flock to the South? And by the way, it's not just the climate. You never hear of anyone retiring and moving up north, by the way. Obviously, the climate does indeed have something to do with it, that is for sure. But there is something entirely different about the South. There's something about the South that you do not find in the North, and you certainly do not find it in the East or in the West. There are things that make the South especially great.

Edward Ward Carmack, who was a United States representative from Tennessee, he was born in 1858 and died in 1908. He wrote what is known today as Carmack's Pledge. That is his pledge to the South. Let me read to you this pledge. He says, "The South is a land that has known sorrows. It's a land that has broken the ashen crust and moistened it with tears. A land scarred and riven by the plowshare of war and billowed with the graves of her dead. But a land of legend, a land of song, a land of hallowed and ironic memories. To that land, every drop of my blood, every fiber of my being, every pulsation of my heart is consecrated forever. I was born of her womb.

I was nurtured at her breast. And when my last hour shall come, I pray that God will allow me to be pillowed upon her bosom and

rocked asleep within her tender encircling arms." Certainly, Edward Ward Carmack loved the South. There's certainly nothing wrong with loving the place where you were born and raised. I'm going to give you a quote now from one old Confederate who was retiring from Appomattox. And these are his exact words, not mine, but here's what he said as he left Appomattox Courthouse.

He said, "My shoes are gone. My clothes are almost gone. I'm weary. I'm sick. I'm hungry. My family has been killed or scattered. And I've suffered all this for my country. I love my country. But if this war is ever over, I'll be damned if I ever love another country." Very obviously, there were individuals who suffered and gave everything for their love of the country. Many of you will remember that Belle Boyd was a Confederate spy.

She was captured and, of course, put in a Union prison. And they offered her release if she would just simply swear allegiance to the federal government. And Belle Boyd gave this answer. She said, "If it is a crime to love the South, its cause and its president, then I'm a criminal. I would rather lie down in this prison and rot and die than leave it owing allegiance to a government such as yours." Very obviously, she did indeed love the South. Let me just simply say it again, there's nothing wrong with loving the South. But let me point out, the reason the South is so special is not just simply because it is the South. It's the principles that were taught and believed and embraced in the South that produced a society in which many people desire to live.

The South's Biblical Christianity

I realize that we have deteriorated in this day and time. I understand that there are a lot of Southerners that have been reconstructed, so to speak. There are plenty of people in the South now who have swallowed the politically correct line and the politically correct stance. Besides that, we've been invaded by numerous Yankee hordes endeavoring to leave their utopian society in the north, but still there are these principles that are ingrained in our being, and these principles still hold sway in our lives. By the way, I talked about the utopian north. I never will forget the time that I learned what the word utopian really means.

You read about these utopian societies, the socialist utopia, the communist utopia, the northern utopia. I remember when I took my first year of Greek, we had to learn a lot of vocabulary. And I came upon this word, utopos. And I thought, that word sounds familiar, utopos. It is the Greek word from which we get our English word, utopia. Utopos is a Greek word made up of two words.

"U" is a negative, which means no. And "topos" is the Greek word for place. The word utopia literally means no place. In other words, utopia does not exist. It's a figment of someone's imagination. It is not reality. So whenever you hear about a communistic or a socialistic utopia, you just understand this. There's no such place in reality. It's all a figment of the imagination. The South, however, did not hold to a utopian dream. The South held to a biblical reality. You've got to remember that the South was known as the Bible Belt.

And by the way, we did not choose that name for ourselves. That name was given to us as a means of castigation. In other words, it was the North in their Unitarian Transcendentalist Rationalistic Society that put that term upon us, the Bible Belt, as a term of derision because we would not forsake the Word of God and follow their rationalistic, humanistic dreams. We would not abandon the Word of God.

After we lost the War of Northern Aggression, then there was that period known as Reconstruction. That period was to reconstruct the South, not physically, but culturally, religiously, ideologically. In other words, we were to be trained to think and talk and act as the northern crowd thought and acted. Thankfully, not everyone was reconstructed. Not everyone bit into that line. Now, why in the world should we love the South? And why in the world is the South a special place? What were the principles that make the South special?

Let me give you several of them today. First of all, Dixie was and is known for her biblical Christianity. Notice what I said. Dixie was and is known for her biblical Christianity. There was recently a Gallup poll placed and it was printed and the title of that Gallup poll was this: "Where does your state rank in religious belief?" This

was posted February the 15th, 2009. And let me just read this brief article. A recent poll of more than 350,000 Americans on the importance of religion revealed that the nation is separated into enclaves of widely divergent viewpoints on faith, with some states and regions clearly religious and others significantly secular. Now notice it didn't take a scholar to figure this out, that the region, this country, is divided by divergent viewpoints on faith. Gallup conducted a telephone poll of 355,334 United States adults asking the question, "Is religion an important part of your daily life?"

As one might suspect, states from the Bible Belt scored highest with 85% of Mississippians and 79% of Tennesseans, for example, answering yes. The poll also revealed, however, that in addition to the Bible Belt, the United States also has a pair of secular strips. The New England states—Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine—scored the lowest in the nation, with only 42% of Vermont residents, or less than half the percentage of those in Mississippi, answering yes. The other secular strip can be found in the West, where Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Nevada all scored in the bottom 10 states for affirming religion's importance in daily life. Isn't that amazing?

You see, the difference that existed in 1861 and 1865 is a difference that still exists today. You have to remember that the South was settled by Scotch and Scotch-Irish people mainly. In fact, during the war, about 75% of the population was either Scotch or Scotch-Irish. And these people held tenaciously to the Word of God. The Bible did indeed play a very important role in the lives of Southern men and women. One of our problems today is this. We have not understood the extent that the Bible indeed played a role in their lives. Many have not grasped this simple fact that there was indeed a theological aspect to the war of northern aggression.

Yes, there were economic reasons. Yes, there were political reasons. But there was also a theological reason. It was southern Presbyterian historian, author, and scholar James Henley Thornwell, who died the first year of the war. He died in 1861. But Thornwell wrote this concerning the conflict before he died. He said, "The parties in this conflict are not merely abolitionists and slaveholders. They are atheists, socialists, communists, red

republicans, Jacobins on the one side"—he's talking about the north—"and on the other side, the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other." We're talking about the South. "In one word, the world is the battleground, Christianity and atheism the combatants, and the progress of Christianity or the progress of humanity is at stake." So here James Henley Thornwell saw this again as a theological war. By and large, in 1861 to 1865, the South was unashamedly Christian and believed that the Bible was indeed the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Also, by and large, in 1861 to 1865, the North predominantly was Unitarian, rationalistic, and humanistic.

Now, that does not mean that everyone in the South was a Christian, nor does it mean that there were no Christians in the North. It just simply points out that there was a large difference in theology between the North and the South. For instance, Robert E. Lee said this concerning the Bible. He said, "The Bible is the book of books, a book which supplies the place of all others and cannot be replaced." A little later Lee said this, "There are many things in that old book that I may never be able to explain, but I accept them as the infallible Word of God and receive its teachings as inspired by the Holy Ghost. I prefer the Bible to any other book.

Theological War and Reconstruction

There is enough in that to satisfy the most ardent thirst for knowledge, to open the way to true wisdom, and to teach the only road to salvation and eternal happiness. It is not above human comprehension and is sufficient to satisfy all desires." So like General Lee, many Christians in the South endeavored not only to believe but also to obey the Word of God and they were not going to forsake the Word of God for a humanistic religion.

It's interesting that during that time many pastors really genuinely believed that the war was an attack on Biblical Christianity. You've got to remember something, because it was indeed an attack on Biblical Christianity, but you have to remember that you cannot change a culture until you first change its theology. There has to be a change in theology before there can be a change in the culture. Stop and think about this, for instance.

Some of you are as old and some of you a little bit older than I am. But do you remember, there's a vast difference between where we live today and how we lived 50 years ago. I tell people, when I was a teenage boy, if I wanted to see a policeman, I had to go uptown. And not only did I have to go uptown, I had to look hard to find one.

Now you can drive down the road and within five miles you've passed 10 or 15 of them. Have you ever wondered why there is such an increase in quote-unquote policemen today? And I'm going to tell you why. Because 50 years ago, there were more people regulated and ordered their lives by the Ten Commandments, by the Word of God, than there is today. And since we do not have God's control in our lives, there has to be the strong arm of man.

Stop and think about this. Do you realize that our government used to send missionaries to foreign countries? We wanted to convert them to Christianity so that they could understand the principles of the Word of God. We no longer send missionaries, now we send armies. You stop and think of all the economic aid that we have sent to places like China, and India, and Iran, and Iraq, and guess what?

There has been and there will be no changes in their culture. I do not care how much foreign aid you send them, I do not care how many diplomats are stationed there. I do not care how many embassies are there. I do not care how well men plead for these countries to embrace what modern day America calls democracy. You will never change a culture until you change their theology. And very obviously, you're not going to change their theology with armies. So very clearly, that's exactly what happened in the South when the South lost the war.

Here came the army, here came the strong arm to make sure that you and I were reconstructed. So when the South did not voluntarily relinquish the word of God, its position on Christianity, we got reconstruction. Reconstruction was specifically designed to make Southerners think and act the way the Northern elite wanted us to think and to act. And by the way, please understand that political correctness today is nothing more than another form of reconstruction. All political correctness is, is trying to train us to

think and act the way the elite, those in control, want us to think and act.

The theological aspect of the war has not been studied as it should. Basil Manly, who was a Baptist pastor and a chaplain to the Provisional Confederate Congress, viewed secession—listen to this—he viewed secession not as revolution, but as a Christian reform movement. W. W. Bennett, the author of "The Great Revival of the Southern Armies," wrote this. He said, "There"—talking about the Southern men—"their convictions of right in what they did were second only to their convictions of the truth of the Christian religion. Nor has the stern logic of events eradicated these convictions from the southern mind.

The cause is lost but its principles still live and must continue to live so long as there remains in human nature any perception and appreciation of justice, truth and virtue." Basically what he said is this, the war may have been lost but the principles still remain and they should remain. Henry Grady who was for years editor of the Atlanta Constitution, on December the 21st, 1886, was making an address to the New England Society in New York City. So here's a Southern man now speaking to the New England Society in New York City, and Henry Grady has this to say to them.

"The South has nothing for which to apologize. She believes that the late struggle between the states was war and not rebellion, revolution and no conspiracy, and that her convictions were as honest as yours. I should be unjust to the dauntless spirit of the South and to my own convictions if I did not make this plain in this presence. The South has nothing to take back. In my native town of Athens, Georgia, is a monument that crowns at Central Hill, a plain white shaft.

Deep cut into its shining side is a name dear to me above the names of men, that of a brave and simple man who died in a brave and simple faith. Not for all the glories of New England, from Plymouth Rock all the way, would I exchange the heritage he left me in that soldier's death. To the foot of that shaft I send my children's children to reverence him who ennobled their name with his heroic blood.

Did you hear what Henry Grady said? Henry Grady said, I would not trade the valor and the honor of my Confederate ancestor for all the glory of Plymouth Rock and everything on down. Why in the world would Henry Grady so venerate the Confederate soldier? The answer is very simple. Because the Confederate soldier basically was fighting for truth, for righteousness, and for principle, and by and large, it can truthfully be said that our confederate ancestors died to prevent the very thing that we have today, a pagan, idolatrous, humanistic government that seeks to play God in the lives of all of its citizens, like our forefathers. We have to come back to the principle there is to be no king but King Jesus.

The South's Biblical Work Ethic

The South was predominantly Christian and held to biblical Christianity. Here's a second reason we should love the South, because the South is known for her biblical work ethic. Do you realize that Southern men have always been known for their hard work, responsibility, and independence? Thankfully, some of those characteristics are still prevalent in the South today. By and large, America, and some in the Southern states, has become a welfare society. Now, instead of work, independence, and responsibility, many look to the federal government to supply all of their needs. Notice, if you would please, when there's a hurricane, when there's a tornado, when there's a flood, when there's a drought, usually instead of crying to the sovereign God of heaven and earth for help and relief, most today just simply cry to Washington, D.C.

Let me just point out one thing about this impending economic collapse that is upon us and about to take place in a more drastic way, I believe, is certainly one good thing. Most people are going to recognize the fact that government is not God. They're going to recognize that government cannot and will not take care of us. We have to assume responsibility for ourselves. We have to have a biblical work ethic. One of my favorite stories to illustrate this is about a Negro slave.

Years ago, Wendell Phillips, who was an ardent abolitionist from New England. Wendell Phillips came to Charleston, South

Carolina, and he was staying in a, what you and I would call a hotel today, but he was being waited on by a Negro servant. In fact, he was served his breakfast in his room. So Wendell Phillips then took the opportunity to represent to the black man that he regarded the black man as a man and as a brother. And moreover, Wendell Phillips told him that he was an abolitionist. And the old black man just stood there. Finally, Wendell Phillips could not stand it any longer. And he said, "Look, I just cannot stand to be waited on by a slave. You're excused, please leave the room." To which the black man replied, "Excuse me sir, I is obliged to stay here because I be responsible for the silverware." Let me tell you something folks, the old timers, black and white, knew what it was to work and be responsible. They knew what it was to have to work hard.

The Bible has a great deal to say about laziness and about sluggards. For instance, in Proverbs 6 and verse 6, the Word of God says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." In Proverbs 6 and verse 9, God asks, "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?" One of my favorite verses is Proverbs 13 and verse 4. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

Now listen to what he said. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing." You can sit back and wish for a new vehicle. You can sit back and wish for a beautiful home. You can sit back and wish for anything, but you will never have it if you're a sluggard. The Bible says, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but it's the soul of the diligent that shall be made fat." The Bible says in Proverbs 20 and verse 4, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."

In other words, he's too lazy to work and just a little bit of cold weather will keep him from working. But the Apostle Paul said it very plainly in 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 10. He said, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." We've got to understand there is indeed a biblical responsibility to work.

We cannot be dependent upon a government that takes and steals and confiscates from others to give to people who do not deserve it. God has decreed and God has demanded that we earn our bread by the sweat of our brow. And the Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 8, that if any will not provide for his own, especially for those of his own household, he's worse than an infidel, he's denied the faith.

Let me just spell this out very clearly for you. My wife and my children and my family are my responsibility. They're not the government's responsibility. I can say it even more plainly. It is not my responsibility to educate or train or feed or provide for your wife and your children. That is your responsibility. If I were to share some Christian charity, that's one thing. But it's not my place to provide for your own. That is your responsibility.

It was Thomas Jefferson who said this, "A wise and frugal government, which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned, that is the sum of good government." You stop and think, folks. Our grandparents, and sometimes our parents, would have been absolutely humiliated and embarrassed to even think about food stamps and welfare and subsidies. They depended solely upon the Lord and their own hard work. You've got to remember something, folks. You have to remember that government cannot give to someone without first taking from someone else.

There is a difference between illegal plunder and legal plunder. If you don't know that difference, I would encourage you to read a book entitled "The Law," written by Frédéric Bastiat. He was a Frenchman. It was written a long time ago. It's a small book. But in that book, he differentiates between illegal and legal plunder.

Now, if I were to reach in my pocket and pull out a pistol, and stick it in your face and say, "Give me all of your money," that is illegal plunder. I could be in real trouble for that. I mean, you might be able to overpower me and take that weapon from me and kill me. Or you might have a weapon of your own. Or if I got caught, I might serve time in prison for something like that. But do you ever realize, if you take from someone legally, if they resist,

they're the ones that go to prison. In this book, "The Law" written by Frédéric Bastiat, he distinguishes between legal plunder and illegal plunder.

Listen to what he writes. Please think about this in light of what is happening today. And remember, this was written over a hundred years ago. He said, "But how is this legal plunder to be identified? Quite simply, see if the law takes from some persons what belongs to them and gives it to other persons to whom it does not belong. See if a law benefits one citizen at the expense of another by doing what the citizens themselves cannot do without committing a crime. Now, legal plunder can be committed in an infinite number of ways. Thus, we have an infinite number of plans for organizing it.

Tariffs, protection, benefits, subsidies, encouragements, progressive taxation, public schools, guaranteed jobs, guaranteed profits, minimum wages, a right to relief, a right to the tools of labor, free credit, and so on and so on. All these plans as a whole, with their common aim of legal plunder, constitute socialism. Socialists desire to practice legal plunder and not illegal plunder. Socialists, like all other monopolists, desire to make the law their own weapon. And when once the law is on the side of socialism, how can it be used against socialism? For when plunder is abetted by the law, it does not fear your courts, your police, or your prison.

Rather, it calls upon them for help. The question of legal plunder must be settled once and for all, and there are only three ways to settle it. Number one, the few plunder the many. Number two, everybody plunders everybody. And number three, nobody plunders anybody." Well, if you read the book, you would find that Bastiat certainly hits the nail on the head. The truth of the matter is this, when you and I leave off biblical responsibility, when you and I leave off a biblical work ethic, the only thing that is left is socialism. Socialism is just simply a straight road to communism.

In the land of the free and in the home of the brave, we have been plundered by our own politicians and by our own government. Why? And the answer is because we have forsaken the work ethic and we now desire, as a people, everything to be

given to us, everything to be handed to us on a silver platter. We've grown to love our socialistic form of life.

I'm going to tell you something. However, when all of this socialism is suddenly and abruptly taken from us, we're going to change our minds. And you're going to find there's going to be a lot of people that are so used to having everything given to them, they're going to riot to the nth degree because they can no longer have it. As Margaret Thatcher once said, "Socialism works very well until you run out of other people's money." And then, of course, it no longer works.

The South's Biblical Hospitality

But Dixie was known not only for her biblical Christianity, but also for her biblical work ethic. Thirdly, Dixie was known for her biblical hospitality. Do you realize that the South is the most friendly and the most hospitable section of the country? All natural Southerners speak to each other. Whether we know their name or not, whether we ever have met them before. We just simply do that. All of us have experience riding down the road and folks just throw up their hands and wave. They nod because we understand, look, this is the South.

I had an aunt and uncle that lived for years in Toledo, Ohio. And of course, they were from the South, but went up there to work. And when they retired, they came back to the South. And my aunt just could not get used to people just waving and speaking to her. And she said, "You know, it's so different down here." She said, "Up north, when a stranger waves at you and speaks to you, you run because they have ulterior motives." Well, if you did that down south, you'd be running yourself to death. Southerners love barbecues and get-togethers and reunions and company of families and friends. That's just part of biblical hospitality. When I was a child, we had company every Sunday afternoon, every Sunday. Some family came home with us from church, they ate dinner with us, they spent the afternoon with us, they ate supper with us, and they went back to church with us at night.

My wife can tell you that after she and I married, we would come home to visit my parents, we would sit down at the table, and

so help me, I would sit down to eat with people I've never seen before in my entire life. The principle was this, if you were at our house and it was dinner time, you came in and ate. Didn't matter who you were, you just came in and ate.

Southerners are known for their hospitality. The Bible says in Romans 12 and verse 13 that we're to distribute to the necessity of the saints, given to hospitality. In 1 Peter 4 and verse 9, the Bible commands us to use hospitality one to another without grudging. When you look in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 2 and Titus 1 and verse 8, the pastor above all is to be known as an example of hospitality. Southerners are naturally hospitable.

That just simply stands to reason. You're in the South. That's how you grew up. That's how you live now. Henry Benjamin Whipple was a bishop from Minnesota, and he visited the South in 1843 and 1844, supposedly to regain his health. Those Minnesotan winters, I guess, were very difficult, but he was in St. Augustine, Florida. And he wrote this in his diary. Listen carefully. "November the 25th, St. Augustine, Florida.

The people of the southern states are generally much more hospitable than northerners. And the difference must be attributed to the fact that they are not such money-loving people. You do not see the low, mean cupidity, the base selfishness so striking a characteristic of one portion of our restless Yankee brethren. I am more and more convinced that most of the exaggerated stories of abolitionists exist only in the imagination. And from personal observation, I know that the efforts of the abolitionists at the North have only served to injure the slave and to destroy the kind and fraternal feeling which should exist between Northern and Southern states." Now here's a Yankee saying, basically, that the Southern people are very unlike Northern people. They're not selfish. They're not money-grubbing and money-loving. They love people.

Very obviously, the South was indeed a place of biblical hospitality. Very quickly fourth, let me tell you that the South and Dixie is known for her stand on freedom and limited government.

The South's Stand on Freedom and Limited Government

Now I want you to stop and think about the word freedom. You remember the movie that Mel Gibson made on Braveheart. You remember there when he was being tortured, they asked him, did he have anything to say? And they thought he was going to recant, but he just shouted as loudly as he could, "Freedom!" Stop and think about that word, freedom. Freedom is not only the ability to move around and do as you please under the law of God. Another aspect of freedom is freedom from the domination and control of sin, as well as freedom from the control and domination of government that often tries to regulate us for our good. When you stop and ask, who's responsible for your welfare? The answer has to come back, you are responsible for your welfare. It's not Washington D.C. It's not Atlanta, Georgia. We as individuals are responsible for every area of our lives. And I can assure you, when you stand before God on Judgment Day, it will not be the federal government that answers for you.

It will not be the state government that answers for you. You will answer individually because you are responsible and accountable. Historically and biblically, the South always believed that government was not only limited by the word of God, but also by the Constitution. In fact, it was Jefferson who said, "Bind it down by the chains of the constitutions." Unhappily, our governments today have taken the attitude of those kings and rulers in Psalm 2, where the Bible says, "The kings of the earth and the rulers thereof take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

In other words, we don't like God's limitations. We want everything different. Depraved men like to play God. Therefore, they refuse His boundaries. The Bible says in the book of Hosea chapter 5 and verse 10, "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water." So the princes of Judah, they didn't like God's limitations. They didn't like God's boundaries. They removed those

boundaries. God said, "I'll pour out my wrath upon them like water."

So it was the South that sought to restrain the federal government in 1861. And when that became impossible, then we seceded. The war was not over slavery. Slavery only became an issue later on in the war. The war was over freedom. By the way, even Europe understood what the war was about. Lord Acton from England, in a letter to General Robert E. Lee, said this, "I saw in states' rights the only availing check upon the absolutism of the sovereign will, and secession filled me with hope, not as the destruction, but the redemption of democracy. I deem that you"—that is General Lee and his people—"were fighting the battles of our liberty, our progress, and our civilization, and I mourn for the stake that was lost at Richmond more deeply than I rejoice over that which is saved at Waterloo." Notice what this Englishman said, he mourned for that which was lost at Appomattox in Richmond. Why? He saw here that Lee and the South was fighting for a limited government. We will never ever return to liberty and freedom until we return to a biblical and constitutional government.

Biblical government, constitutional government is always a limited government. General Robert E. Lee said this, "All that the South has ever desired was that the union established by our forefathers should be preserved and that the government as originally organized should be administered in purity and in truth." General Lee also warned, and he said this, "The consolidation of the states into one vast empire, sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home, will be certain the precursor of ruin which has overwhelmed all that preceded it." Notice what he said. When you have a consolidation of the states into one vast empire, it's going to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home. It's certainly true that the state or the government that seeks to play God shall be destroyed by God.

As Hosea 5 and verse 10 said, "He shall pour his wrath upon them like water." Let me read to you a quote by R.J. Rushdoony. R.J. Rushdoony died in 2001, and I want you to listen to what he wrote, and I'm going to tell you the date in which he wrote it after I

finish. One short paragraph. Here's what he said. "The authority of the state is everywhere in decay. But everywhere the state is grasping for more power as the cure-all for man's problems. The powers of the state are thus likely to increase markedly in the years ahead, but that increase is the forerunner of the state's collapse as man's saving agency." Now listen to what he said. He said, "Everywhere the marks of the collapse of the state are evident. But as it collapses, it's going to grasp for more and more power until it is absolutely and totally destroyed." And R.J. Rushdoony wrote that in 1971.

Almost as if it had been written yesterday. You see, the South believed in a limited government. And I'm going to tell you something, folks. I could say truthfully that we will eventually have a limited government. We will either have it through obedience or through destruction, but we will have it one way or the other. Until then, we need men. Men who can be counted on. Men who understand the principles for which our forefathers fought and died. Men who embrace them. Men who love them. Men who live them. Men who will fight for them.

Conclusion: A Call for Godly Men

It was Josiah Gilbert Holland, who died in 1881, who wrote this poem. "Wanted" is the title. "God give us men. A time like this demands strong minds, great hearts, a true faith, and ready hands. Men whom the lust of office does not kill. Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy. Men who will possess opinions and a will. Men who have honor. Men who will not lie. Men who can stand before a demagogue and damn his treacherous flatteries without winking. Tall men, sun-crowned men, who live above the fog, in duty, in public duty and in private thinking.

For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds, their large professions and little deeds, mingle in selfish strife, lo, freedom weeps. Wrong rules the land and waiting justice sleeps." But notice what he said, "God give us men." And may I submit to you, the men we need are like the men who fought and died as our ancestors fought and died. They lived what they believed. They

held these principles tenaciously. They believed them. They applied them. And may God give us men.

Have you ever stopped to think? What a difference it would make in our government, in our country, in our states, in our communities, if we had men like Robert Edward Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Jeb Stuart, Jubal Early. What about these men? Godly men. Determined men. Men of conviction and principle. God give us men. Robert E. Lee's first duty station. A great place to come back to what General Lee believed. And he believed the foundation of all society was indeed the Word of God. Let's pray, shall we?

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are so thankful for this opportunity again on Confederate Memorial Day to honor Thee and honor our ancestors by proclaiming once again the principles, not only from Your Word, but also the principles for which our forefathers lived and died. And Lord, we do need men. God, give us men, godly men, holy men, righteous men, who will stand for truth. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

Refusing Enemy's Testimony

June 27, 2010

Refusing the Enemy's Testimony

Introduction: The Problem of False Testimony

The book of Mark, chapter one. Mark 1:34 says, “And he healed many that were sick of diverse diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.” The title of today's message is “Refusing the Enemy's Testimony.” I want you to think about that, and you will understand the title momentarily. There are many who testify of Christ who really do not know Christ.

In fact, all you've got to do is look around, first of all, to Hollywood. It's amazing to me how many Hollywood movie stars, quote-unquote, profess to be Christians, and yet their lives are absolute shambles. They live in total disobedience to Christ and His law. On the other hand, there are the politicians. So many get on the bandwagon of Christianity and profess to be Christians, and

yet everything they do—every law they pass and every law they vote for—is absolutely, totally contrary to Christ and the Bible. Thus they are not really Christians. They turn out to be the enemies of Christ.

Biblical Warnings Against False Testimony

In Acts chapter 13, the Apostle Paul addressed Elymas, the sorcerer, who tried to prevent the deputy of that country from coming to Christ and receiving the gospel. The Scripture says: "Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Notice how Paul addressed this man as the enemy of all righteousness.

In Philippians chapter 3, verses 18 and 19, the Apostle Paul said: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." The Bible tells us very clearly that there are enemies of the cross of Christ. Since their God is their belly, there are many who testify of Christ who really do not know Christ. They testify falsely, and we are commanded not to receive them nor to listen to their testimony.

The Principle: Bible as Sole Authority

Interestingly, there are others who testify of Christ whose testimony may have some truth in it, and yet at the same time we are commanded not to listen to them, nor receive their testimonies at all. There are some who testify of Christ, who speak absolutely the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and yet we are forbidden to receive their testimonies. How in the world can that be? I will show you from the Bible.

There are many who refuse to receive one simple truth: the Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice. Let that sink in. The Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice. So what many do is turn from that simple principle. They go not only to the figment of their own imaginations, but also to their own humanistic reasoning and rationalism. Some turn to try to find truth in other areas, such as fortune telling, horoscopes, astrology, Ouija boards, tarot cards, and even necromancy, which is talking with the dead. Whenever you refuse the simple principle and truth that the Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice, you open yourself up to all of these practices that are condemned in the Scripture.

Our Lord warned us in Mark 4:24, “Take heed what ye hear.” In Luke 8:18, He said, “Take heed how ye hear.” We are responsible for what we hear. We must make sure that what we hear is the absolute truth, the Word of God. Once we know that it is the truth of the Word of God, we have to pay careful attention to how we hear it. We cannot let our minds wander and stray if it is God’s Word and God’s truth.

The Bible says in Isaiah 8:20, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” In order to give a proper testimony concerning Christ, one has to speak according to the Word of God.

Simply because one claims to be a preacher does not mean one thing. Recently I have been sent some websites of men who claim to be preachers, and they were very obviously doing what most people would call preaching. But I want you to see what the Bible says. Our Lord begins in Matthew 7:15: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

False Prophets and False Professions

In one sense, a false prophet is usually fairly easy to detect, because a false prophet is not necessarily concerned with preaching and teaching the Word of God. He is concerned with edifying himself and getting everything for himself that he can get. He is a false prophet.

He could care less about the sheep. He could care less about the people. But He says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Notice what our Lord says: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Of course, the answer is no. He said, "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." He quotes this same truth again: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them"—not particularly by what they say, but by how they live and conduct their lives.

Then He says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

On the one hand, He is warning against false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, whom you will know by their fruits. However, He also says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Many will say, "Have we not prophesied in thy name?" That is, have we not preached in your name? "In your name, we have cast out devils. In your name, we have done many wonderful works."

Undoubtedly, some of these individuals were very genuine, sincere, likable, and lovable. No doubt, they did many things pleasing toward men. Men may have admired them and spoken well of them. But our Lord says, here is the problem: they did not know Me. "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you." Not, "I knew you and forgot you." "I never knew you" to begin with. You were never Mine. You were never genuinely regenerated or converted. Although they were genuinely sincere, they did not belong to Christ, and therefore they were bearing false witness. How could they point others to Christ if they did not know Christ themselves?

Our Lord has repeatedly warned us to take heed not only what we hear, but how we hear. He has also warned us to beware of individuals who claim to have special insights and supernatural knowledge. There are groups today that profess, "If you get in with us, we're going to give you this secret, this esoteric knowledge that no one else has." It's pure Gnosticism, the very thing that the Apostles fought against in the New Testament.

In Matthew 24, beginning with verse 23, our Lord says: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible"—it's not, thank God—"but if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Notice what He said: "If it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Our Lord says, don't believe these people, period. Christ is revealed in the Word of God. He is not revealed in the imaginations or secret thought processes of men. There is no such thing as supernatural knowledge over and above and beyond the Word of God. If you go over and above and beyond the Word of God, mark it down: you have gone too far.

In John chapter 2, our Lord explains that He does not need men to testify of Him, because He knows what is in man: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." Our Lord knows what is in man because He is God and omniscient. Moreover, He created us and understands His creation. He also knows the depravity of our hearts.

Jeremiah 17, verses 9 and 10, says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Verse 10 says, “I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his

doings.” Only God knows our hearts perfectly, totally, and completely. The heart of man is deceitful above all things. Christ knows all false pretensions, false professions, and hypocrites. You cannot deceive Him, thwart Him, or outsmart Him. He knows everything. Our Lord knew who belonged to Him and who did not.

Did He not say to His own disciples, “Have not I chosen you, and one of you is a devil?” He knew who Judas was. We should understand that the mere fact that our Lord commands us, as His children, to testify of Him and give witness to Him is an act of pure grace. Who are you and I to talk about the Son of God? Consider our sinfulness, ignorance, rebellion, and resistance to Him. Yet in His grace and mercy, He saved us, brought us to Himself, and now commands us to be His witnesses and testifiers. God could have inscribed the gospel in the stars, written it in the heavens, inscribed it upon the mountains, or written it on the seashore, but He did not. He gave it to us in His Word and commanded us to be His witnesses and testify of Him.

Christ's Refusal of Demonic Testimony in Mark

That is pure, absolute grace. In 1 Peter 2 and verse 5, Peter wrote, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Our Lord is pleased to use private testimonies, but is also more pleased, I think, to use public testimony—that is, the preaching of the gospel. For 1 Corinthians 1 in verse 21 we read: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Now let me show you why this introduction matters. In Mark chapter 1, verse 34, the Bible says, "And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him." Christ did not allow the devils to speak because they knew Him.

The word "devils" is the Greek word daimonion, from which we derive our English word "demons." Oftentimes in the Bible, they are referred to as unclean spirits or evil spirits. I do not care if you

call them demons, unclean spirits, or evil spirits. They are associated as the minions, ministers, and messengers of Satan.

I find that statement absolutely amazing. Christ would not suffer or allow these demons to speak because they knew Him. They knew that Jesus Christ was and is the eternal Son of God. They knew that He was the Messiah, the Savior, the Lord, and God in the flesh, and yet He would not allow them to speak.

There are some who may give absolute truth in their testimony, but we are not to listen to it or receive it. They knew the truth, but our Lord says, No, you cannot give testimony. The word "know" here, when the Bible says "they knew him," does not indicate personal, intimate knowledge. It is the Greek word eido, which means to know, to have knowledge of, to understand, in other words.

These demons had what you and I would call an intellectual understanding. They had an intellectual knowledge. They did not have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ in any way whatsoever. It is possible to have an intellectual faith and no saving faith.

In Mark chapter one, verse 23, notice how our Lord refused to let these demons speak even though they knew the truth: "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him." The demon said, "I know thee who thou art, thou art the Holy One of God." Our Lord rebuked him and would not allow him to testify as to who He was.

In Mark chapter 3, we read: "For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known." They cried out, saying, "Thou art the Son of God," but He would not have that testimony.

Look also at Mark chapter 5, concerning the maniac of Gadara: "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." He acknowledged Jesus as the Son of the most high God.

Here is the point: in each of these instances, these unclean spirits acknowledged and confessed the deity of Jesus Christ. They knew that He was God. They knew that He was the Messiah. They knew that they were helpless before Him and had to obey Him. They acknowledged that they were going to be punished and tormented. They knew these things. The same truth appears in Luke chapter 4, where the unclean spirits recognized who He was.

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ."

Let me point out something that you should have already thought of this. In this instance, demons are smarter than men. They know that Jesus Christ is God. They know that they're helpless before Him. They know that they will be tormented and punished. And yet we have in our day and time, like we've always had, men who claim to have superior intellects and superior knowledge who deny the deity of Christ and deny eternal punishment and deny that they are helpless. Somehow, demons have a little more sense than most men. And among those who deny the deity of Christ, oftentimes, and deny the power of Christ, and deny the fact that they will be punished for their wickedness and their sins, are our rulers. Our civil rulers.

I want to show you something. This is amazing to me. Look in your Bibles at 1 Corinthians chapter 2. This will show you how ignorant and how ungodly most civil rulers have been and still are. Notice 1 Corinthians chapter 2, beginning with verse 6. Look what the Apostle Paul writes, 1 Corinthians 2, verse 6: "Howbeit we

speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought."

There is a wisdom of God, and there is a wisdom of the world. There is a godly wisdom and a human wisdom; there is a biblical wisdom and a worldly wisdom. They are contrary to each other. Verse 7 says, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Isn't that interesting? I want you to look at that carefully. Stop and think about that.

Whether you are talking about Pilate, Herod, Tiberius, or any ruler of those days, none of them had any idea who Christ was, what His mission was, or what He was doing. They were absolutely, totally, and completely ignorant. Look in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, beginning with verse 18, where the Apostle Paul wrote:

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

The world thinks that everything concerning Christ and the Bible is nothing but foolishness. They have no time for Christ or for Scripture. Foolish men do not believe in Christ, trust Christ, or desire Christ. They believe somehow that they are superior to Christ, and that their knowledge is superior to the wisdom of the Word of God. What has God done? The Bible says that in His wisdom He has destroyed the wisdom of the wise. In other words, He has taken them in their own foolishness and captured them in their own rebellion.

It is true—in fact, let me read it—in Isaiah 53, verses 1 through 3, speaking about Christ: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up

before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Now notice what the Bible says about Christ. He grew up as a root out of dry ground. In other words, Christ did not come riding on a white charger with gold and silver garments all over Him. He came as the lowly, humble, obedient servant of the one true and living God. The world said, "I don't have anything to do with Him. We want someone to come in on a white charger and take charge, someone who can demonstrate that he's really King of kings."

That is why, in Psalm 2, verses 10 through 12, the Bible commands the kings and rulers of this earth: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

So, what do kings and rulers of the earth do? They despise Him. They think He's weak and helpless. Who wants a root out of dry ground, someone with no form or comeliness, someone who comes as a servant? The world hates Christ. The rulers hate Christ.

Let me show you something. In the biblical sense of the word, men are worse than demons. James writes in chapter 2, verse 19: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."

The demons also believe and tremble. All through Scripture they confessed and acknowledged that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. There are many today who profess to believe in Christ. They have an intellectual faith. They will freely admit that Christ is God or that the Bible is the Word of God. But their faith is not even as great as the demons' faith. Demons are totally, completely, helplessly lost, because they not only believe, they tremble. Men today not only disbelieve; they will not tremble before the sovereign God of heaven and earth. All through the Gospels, we

read that Christ would not allow the demons to testify to His person.

The question we must ask is why. They certainly knew who He was, and they had to obey Him. They had no choice. Even witnesses in those days testified that the demons had to obey. For instance, Mark 1:27 records that everyone was amazed and asked what new doctrine this was, because Christ commanded the unclean spirits with authority, and they obeyed Him. Everyone around knew that He had power over the unclean spirits, and they had to obey Him. We also know that these unclean spirits spoke the truth, for they said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Reasons for Refusing the Enemy's Testimony

So why would He not allow them to speak? Why would He not receive their testimony, or allow others to receive it? Let me try to give you some answers, first of all. Christ refused to allow those to testify who would only soil and injure His character. It is true that there were times when our Lord’s enemies spoke well of Him, sometimes intentionally and sometimes unintentionally.

It is quite one thing for your enemy to say, “You are right; I am wrong.” In Matthew 27:54, when our Lord was crucified, the Bible says, “Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.” They at least acknowledged that this was indeed the Son of God.

Caiaphas, who was a high priest and a wicked man, also testified of Christ, but not willingly. In John 11:47, “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.” In other words, it was obvious that He was doing miracles. They continued, “If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” They were interested only in themselves.

“ And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider

that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." Caiaphas did not mean this in a good sense, although he was telling the truth. "And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

What Caiaphas meant was, "Let's kill him and save our place." But our Lord took that testimony and turned it around for a biblical testimony, since Caiaphas was indeed the high priest at that particular time.

It is one thing for your enemy to testify that you are right and he is wrong. It is quite another thing to have someone who hates and despises you, your mortal enemy, testify of your character. Can you imagine being in a court of law with a whole list of prostitutes there to testify of your purity? How about having a thief testify as to your honesty, or a liar and a perjurer testify to your truthfulness?

If the prostitutes told the truth and you were virtuous, if the thief told the truth and you were honest, or if a liar and perjurer told the truth and you were truthful, who is going to believe them? Some may testify truthfully, but the impact of that testimony will be negative. Christ, therefore, would not allow wicked ones to testify concerning His person, His character, or His mission.

The Apostle Paul believed the same. In Acts 16, a young woman possessed with a spirit of divination, a soothsayer who had gained much money for those controlling her, followed Paul and the others. The Scripture says, "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation."

"And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

Was not this girl telling the truth? These were men of God, and they were showing the way of salvation. That was the truth. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said, “No, no. We’re not going to have that kind of testimony.” He commanded the evil spirit to come out of her. Afterward, Paul and Silas were thrown into jail and beaten because her masters had lost their hope of gain.

Paul likewise refused a testimony that was not of God. The testimony may have been true, but it came from an enemy of God. It is not proper for demons to preach the gospel. It is not proper for lost men to preach the gospel, or for hypocrites to preach the gospel. It does not matter whether they are telling the truth. Christ and the Apostle Paul refused the enemy’s testimony. The enemy would only soil and injure the character of Christ and the apostles. Here is the second reason Christ refused their testimony: He would not receive testimony from an irreconcilable enemy who was doomed to destruction.

In Mark 1:24, notice what the enemy said: “Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” He was telling the truth, but he was still an enemy. They had an inkling of what was going to happen.

In Matthew 8:28-29, we read: “And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” They did not only know who Jesus Christ was; they knew that they were doomed. In other words, they knew they were going to be tormented, but asked whether He had come to take them early. They are irreconcilable enemies.

Revelation 12:12 says, “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” He knows he is doomed and that there is only a short time. There can be no reconciliation between light and darkness. Either the light will

drive out the darkness or the darkness will overcome the light. There can be no reconciliation between holiness and unrighteousness, nor between those who love, adore, and worship Christ and those who hate Him.

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." Anathema means to be doomed and damned; Maranatha means at the coming of the Lord. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be doomed and damned at the coming of the Lord. There is no reconciliation—not between those who love Christ and those who hate Christ.

Look in 2 Corinthians 6, beginning with verse 14. I want you to see this passage in light of the truth that there is no reconciliation between truth and lies. He says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

As God's people, then, we should have nothing to do with the enemies of all righteousness. We should have nothing to do with the devil, his minions, his messengers, his instruments, his schemes, or his entertainment. That includes Harry Potter, a lot of junk that comes out of Hollywood, and much of what comes on your television sets. You have nothing in common with that. Nothing! You should absolutely, totally, completely, and unequivocally refuse to watch any religious program that Hollywood puts out. I do not care who does it. If Hollywood puts it out, it is not biblical. Our Lord said that He would not take testimony from irreconcilable enemies who are doomed to destruction.

Thirdly, Christ did not need any further testimony than that which had already been given. Turn back to John chapter 5. I want to begin reading at verse 31 and continue through verse 40. Follow me, and I will come back and show you these truths. Christ did not need any additional testimony other than that which had already been given. Watch: John 5, verse 31.

Our Lord said, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.

"Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Now note what our Lord says. You want testimonies; you want witnesses. All right. He says, I will give you some witnesses. The first is John the Baptist. He testified of me and to the truth. Read it for yourself in the Gospels. But our Lord said, I do not necessarily have to have the testimony of man. He was a burning and shining light, and you were willing for a season to listen to John. John the Baptist was a witness and the forerunner of Christ, but He said, "I have a greater witness than that of John"—the works that I do.

Remember that He told those people, "Believe me not, believe me at least for the works' sake." The works that Christ did evidenced and testified that He was indeed the Son of God. If you do not want to believe His works, He has another testifier, another witness: the Father. The Father who sent Him testified of Him on several occasions. And there is still another witness that testifies of Him: the Scriptures. There was the witness of John the Baptist, the

witness of His works, the witness of the Father, and the witness of the Scriptures.

In John chapter 5, verse 40, He says, “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” Our Lord is saying, “You wanted witnesses? I gave them to you: John the Baptist, my works, the Father, and the Scriptures.” Do you realize the problem that wicked men have is not an insufficiency of truth or witnesses? No, no, no. There is plenty of truth and plenty of witnesses. Now, I want you to know what He said. In light of all these witnesses, “ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Application: Rejecting the World's Testimony

In other words, your will is locked in stubborn rebellion to Me. You love your sin. You love your wickedness. Men will not come. And the truth of the matter is, men by nature do not want to come to Christ. And the truth is, they cannot come because they love their sin more than they love salvation. The problem is not that there is not a sufficiency of truth in this world.

We don't need the devil. We don't need demons. We don't need the ungodly. No, no, no. We have a sufficient truth right here. We just need to learn to pay attention to this truth. In this day and time, and as it has been forever, everybody wants a sign. Our Lord said in Matthew 16:4, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." The Pharisees came to Christ, tempting Him and seeking a sign in Matthew chapter 16.

He said, "You hypocrites." He said, "You can discern the face of the sky, but you can't discern the times." They could say it was going to be fair weather because in the evening the sun was red and lowering. In the morning, it was going to be foul weather because the sun was red and lowering. He said, "You know all about this." But then He said, "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign."

What are most people seeking for today? They're looking for feelings. They're looking for emotionalism. They're looking for an experience. They're looking for anything and everything other than the pure, unadulterated Word of God. If you want something over

and above and beyond the Word of God, you're going to keep on wanting until you die, unless you get it from the devil. Christ is not going to condescend to give you a feeling, emotion, or experience that is extra-biblical, over and above and beyond the Word of God. He's just not going to do it.

This ties it together. Acts chapter 19 contains one of the most humorous passages in Scripture, and it is also one of the most instructive passages of Scripture. Every time I read it, I smile. Sometimes I just laugh out loud, but it's funny. It shows that our Lord—and listen carefully—His true preachers are known in hell. Acts chapter 19, verse 13, says: "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists"—that is, they cast out devils—"took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

"And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

In other words, he beat the devil out of them. They said, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, come out of the man." And the evil spirit said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The evil spirit recognized the authority of Jesus and Paul, but not the authority of these evil men who were trying to cast him out.

Listen carefully: we should not need, desire, or want to receive the testimony or the praise of the wicked. I don't need anyone in politics to pat me on the back. I don't need anyone in Hollywood to elevate me on a pedestal. I could care less. You should care less as well, because our sole authority for faith and practice is the Word of God. We should never be fooled when the enemy tries to butter us up or speak our language.

What did our Lord say? "By their fruits ye shall know them." Don't listen to their words; watch their lives. If their lives are contrary to their words, they're liars. You will know them by their

conduct and actions. Remember, folks, there are only two sides: saved and unsaved, covenant keepers and covenant breakers. You're either saved or unsaved; you're either a covenant keeper or covenant breaker. There's no in-between.

There is no king's ex. There is no neutral ground. There is no compromise. Our Lord said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

Which brings me to the second application: If we really want to know more about Christ, heaven, or anything else, all we need to do is study the Scripture. Do you realize that everything we need to know for life and godliness, according to Scripture, is given to us? If I want to know how to be a good husband, all I have to do is read the Scripture. If you want to know how to be a good wife, all you have to do is read the Scripture. Scripture says, "Wife, submit yourselves to your husband"—don't push him down. I'm teasing. You see what I'm saying? If you want to know how to handle your money, study the Scripture. If you want to know how to be a good civil ruler, study the Scripture. You want to know how to be a good farmer or gardener? Study the Scripture.

The Scripture gives us everything we need to know. If you really want to be a good Christian, study the Scripture. I want to show you one last passage, and show you how absolutely emphatic Scripture is that the Word of God is our sole authority for faith and practice. Turn to Luke chapter 16. Everyone will recognize this passage, or at least I hope that you will.

This is the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Lazarus died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Seeing Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom, he said, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

Abraham explained that there was a great gulf between them and that they could not cross it. In verse 26, Abraham said, "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." In other words,

once you die, your fate is sealed in that sense of the word. You either die saved or you die unsaved. There's no changing it once you're dead. Now watch. Verse 27.

Here is what the rich man said. Remember, he is in hell: “Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” He became missionary-minded very quickly. “I have five brothers. Send Lazarus, that he may warn them, lest they come to this place of torment.”

And Abraham said unto him, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” You are not getting anything else other than what I have given you: the Word of God. The rich man said, “Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” And he said unto him, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

I know Someone who rose from the dead: Jesus Christ. Yet the world still will not believe. They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. If you do not hear the Word of God, you will not hear anything. If you do not hear the Word of God, nothing you hear will do you any good or help you. We do not need the enemy's testimony. What we need is the testimony of God, and that is given to us in His Word.

Conclusion: The Sufficiency of God's Testimony

Here is another lesson we should learn: you do not believe the enemies of God. More precisely, you do not receive the testimony of the enemies of God, even when they speak the truth. Most of the time, they will not speak the truth. But if they do speak the truth, you still do not receive it, for our Lord refused His enemy's testimony. The only testimony we need is the testimony of God our Father, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and has given us His Word.

Father, in Thy name we bow to Thee this day. We are thankful for Jesus Christ and for the Word of God. Lord, help us to learn it,

know it, live it, and apply it. Help us to see its absolute importance, and give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

Sinfulness of Sin

August 1, 2010

Introduction: The Desire for Holiness

I want to share a message with you that the Lord impressed upon my heart many years ago. It has helped me immensely in my Christian life, and I hope that it will help you as well.

Joseph's Temptation and Logical Arguments

I believe that for the true child of God, the greatest desire is to live holy, obediently, and righteously before the Lord. Anything that we can find in Scripture that will enable us to do that should indeed be received with thanksgiving.

This is where Joseph is in captivity. He is a slave in Potiphar's house. Joseph found grace in his sight, served him, and was made overseer over his house and all that he had. The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field. Potiphar left all that he had in Joseph's hand and knew not all he had, save the bread which he did eat. Joseph was a goodly person and well

favored. After these things, his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph and said, “Lie with me.”

But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, “Behold, my master wotteth not, or knoweth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I, neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

Sin is a small three-lettered word, and yet, for a word so simple, so easily spelled, and so easily pronounced, it carries great consequences. Sin is something that is frequently committed, constantly denied, and strenuously rejected as the cause of all of our heartache, trouble, and helplessness. In fact, we usually use euphemistic terms in reference to sin.

Sin's Euphemisms and Consequences

Euphemism is a term by which you make something much lighter. Most people do not talk about death; they talk about passing. They do not talk about adultery; they talk about having an affair. Men do the same with sin. Men call sin an accident; God calls it an abomination. Men call sin a blunder; God calls it blindness. Men call sin chance; God calls sin a choice. Men call sin a defect; God calls it a disease. Men call sin an error; God calls it enmity. Men call sin fascination; God calls it a fatality. Men call sin good; God says it is godlessness. Men call sin luxury; God calls it lawlessness. Men call sin infirmity; God calls it iniquity. God calls it madness, while men call it a mistake. Men refer to sin as weakness; God says it is willfulness.

We do everything we can to water sin down. When sin is discussed, what usually comes to the forefront is its consequences, especially its consequences upon us. We remember Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death,” and think about how sin kills us and hurts ourselves, our family, our friends, and our society. Sin brings suffering physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and financially. The Bible says plainly in Ezekiel 18:4 and 20, “The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.” There are consequences to sin.

One principle of Scripture makes this exceedingly clear: “Be not deceived. God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” In 1 Chronicles 4, Jabez was more honourable than his brethren, and he prayed, “Lord, that thou mightest bless me indeed, and thy hand mightest be upon me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me.” Very obviously, sin does indeed grieve us. Not only do we talk about the consequences of sin; we frequently talk about the fact that we are sinners.

Everyone understands, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Everyone understands, "Wherefore, by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We know that man is a sinner. The Apostle Paul said, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Our Lord said in Luke 19:10 that He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Our Lord began His preaching ministry in Mark 1:15: "Repent ye and believe the gospel."

Why do you need to repent if you have nothing to repent over? Why do you need to believe if you are not an unbeliever? Very obviously, we are sinners.

It is not my intention today to discuss the full range of the doctrine of sin. What I want to show you emphatically is that we sin, when we sin, against a personal God. Look at what Joseph said in verse 9. My entire message is going to explain this one phrase: "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Joseph was a believer in a pagan household. His master's wife was wicked and ungodly, and the day came when she literally made a play for him. When she did, Joseph countered her with illogical arguments—arguments that were exceedingly rational and could be easily understood even by a heathen. Genesis 39:7 says, "And it came to pass, after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and she said, Lie with me. But he refused. And he said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not, or knoweth not what is with me in the house."

"And he hath committed all that he hath into my hand." The very first thing Joseph does is emphasize the trust his master has placed in him. He is telling her that it would be wrong and wicked for him to betray that trust.

Secondly, he argues that his master had promoted him to great authority in that house. He told her that no one else had any authority greater than his. Look in verse 9: “There is none greater in this house than I.” He had great authority. His argument was that he would be wicked and wrong to abuse and misuse this authority. Would to God our politicians understood that.

He said, “I’m in a position of trust. I’m not going to do that. I’m in a position of authority. I’m certainly not going to violate that position of authority.”

Thirdly, he argues from the liberty, freedom, and graciousness his master had given him. He said that his master had kept back nothing from him. In other words, Joseph was saying, “I have anything I desire in this household. I have liberty. I have freedom. Everything that my master has, he’s committed to my hand.” His master did not even know what he had except what he ate. Joseph was in control of everything.

Fourthly, he argues the sanctity of marriage. He said in verse 9, “He’s not kept back anything from me except thee because thou art his wife.” He said, “I have no right to you. You are the personal property of your husband. He rightfully has kept you back from me, and I’m not going to violate any of these trusts or positions of authority.”

But note this: while he argues with this woman logically and rationally, when it comes to himself he says, “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Here is Joseph’s argument for himself. He leaves all these peripheral issues. Yes, all those things would be sinful, wicked, and wrong.

But what he's saying, that is not the main point. The main point is this. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? And in the Hebrew, it's really emphatic. He calls it this wickedness, this exceeding great one. And, of course, adultery was reckoned as a sin at that time just as it is now. And had Joseph committed that

sin, very obviously it would have been aggravated not only by his position of trust, his position of authority, and all the favors and blessings that his master had given upon him and placed upon him. Had Joseph committed that sin, certainly it would have been against all of those things, but primarily he said it's going to be a sin against God. It'll be a sin against God's revealed will. It'll be a sin against God's righteous nature. It will be a sin against God personally. And so he said, how then can I do this great evil and sin against God? So Joseph said, I'm not about to comply with my master's wife's request.

I'm just simply not going to do that. Had Joseph done so, certainly he would have sinned against his master. He would have sinned against his master's wife. He would have sinned against his master's household. He would have sinned against his family. He would have sinned against himself. Yet all of these trespasses were put kind of to one side and said, my greatest concern is that I'm going to sin against God.

David's Confession: Sin Against God Alone

Now I want you to turn in your Bibles, hold Genesis 39, but turn in your Bibles, if you would, to Psalm 51 very quickly, and I want you to see what David says in verses 3 and 4. Most of you are familiar with this passage. Notice Psalm 51 and verses 3 and 4. Look what David says. Psalm 51, verse 3. David is praying, this is one of his penitential psalms, he says, "For I acknowledge my transgression and my sin is ever before me." And then he says in verse 4, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." Now, this is David's penitential psalm, one of them, where David is confessing and acknowledging his sin of adultery with Bathsheba and, of course, the murder of Uriah. But I want you to note what he says in verse 4. He said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight."

Did not David sin against Bathsheba? Of course he did. Did not David sin against Uriah? He most certainly did; he had him murdered. God charged David with Uriah’s murder, saying, “You murdered Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon.” Did

not David sin against Bathsheba's household? Yes. Did he not sin against his family as well? He sinned against his kingdom because he was king.

So how is it that in Psalm 51 and verse 4 David says, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this wickedness in thy sight"? He had sinned against so many other people, yet he comes down to this one thing: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." While David certainly had trespassed against all these other people, he realized that the great transgression he had committed was primarily against God alone. His greatest sin was against God.

There is a difference between Joseph and David. The truth that our God is a personal God, that we are in a covenantal relationship with Him, that He is our Father, and that He is our holy, righteous Sovereign had entered into Joseph's heart. When his master's wife made a play for Joseph, Joseph exclaimed, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against my God?"

David, on the other hand, sinned without thinking of the magnitude of his wickedness. But afterward, when the reality of what he had done sank into his soul, David repented and wrote eight penitential psalms, saying, "Lord, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I've sinned against you. I've violated my word."

We fail to comprehend this singular fact: while we sin against other people, our sin is primarily against the holy God. Scripture describes sin as acts of enmity and hostility against God; in Leviticus 26, as walking contrary to God; in Isaiah 1, as rebelling against God; in Isaiah 45 and verse 9, as contending with God; and in Numbers 11, as despising God. All our sins have reference to God. Sin literally makes men haters of God and resistors of God, according to Acts chapter 7.

It makes men fighters against God. It makes men blasphemers against God. It makes men deniers of God. Sin is so personally against God. If we understood—if it really, really sunk deep into our souls—what our sin was actually doing, how it's not just grieving us, but it's grieving the Lord, and how it's not just against our brethren, but it's against the Lord, we would see sin differently.

The Scripture repeatedly talks about sin being against God. Look in your Bibles to Judges chapter 10 and verse 10. The Word of God says, “And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God and also served Baalim.” Notice what they said: “We have sinned against thee.”

Turn over to 2 Chronicles chapter 6 and look at verse 26: “When the heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against thee, yet if they pray toward this place and confess thy name and turn from their sin when thou dost afflict them.” The source then contains the interruption, “Nobody said when they have sinned against thee.” Continuing at verse 36: “If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives into a land far off.” Verse 39 says, “Then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer, and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee.”

Whether you are looking in Nehemiah, Psalms, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or Ezra, notice that when all of these men pray, they say, “Against thee, O Lord, have we committed these sins. To us belong confusion of faces. Thou art righteous, O God, but we have sinned against thee.”

Think about this: sin is against God personally. We have all heard the expression, “Out of sight, out of mind.” We see our brethren and the results of our sin against them. We can even see the results of our sin against our families. But we cannot really see, in one sense, the consequences of our sin against God. However, when we understand that He is a personal God—our God and our Father—it makes things more personal.

Suppose I stole some money from Brother Tim. I have not only sinned against him; would I be anxious to face him or be around him? The truth is, I would not want to face him or be around him. I would be embarrassed. He may have caught me, or, even if he had not, I would still avoid him because I would be afraid he might catch me.

Do you realize that our sin affects God? The Bible speaks of grieving Him, vexing Him, quenching Him, angering Him, provoking Him, and insulting Him. We must realize that our God is a personal God. Sin is contrary to God and to the person and nature of God. Remember that God is holy. God's name is holy, and as His name is, so is He. Exodus 15:11 tells us that God is glorious in holiness. Revelation 15:4 says, "Thou only art holy." God is holy, all holy, only holy, altogether holy, and always holy. Therefore sin is always sinful, all sinful, only sinful, and always sinful. As there is no sin in God, there is no holiness or good in sin. Holiness is the attribute of God that frees Him not only from evil itself, but from all appearance and suspicion of evil. That is why He said, "Let no man say, When he is tempted, I am tempted of God."

"For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." The Bible tells us in Habakkuk 1:13 that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil and canst not look upon iniquity. God may look upon it to judge it, but He cannot look upon it approvingly or condoningly. Why? It is totally, absolutely contrary to Him. So Joseph said, "How then can I do this wickedness, and sin against my God?"

Sin is absolutely blasphemous, wicked, and insulting to our gracious, sovereign, heavenly Father. Here is the first truth: Sin, if possible, would depose and dethrone God. Do you realize that sin will not allow God to be on His throne? If it could, it would depose and dethrone God. Sin does not want God to rule and control the world that He has created. Sin desires to rule.

Sin Denies God's Sovereignty

Read Romans 6:11–22, where the Apostle Paul tells us, "Likewise reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then, "Let not sin therefore have dominion over you." Sin wants to reign as a king. The whole thrust of Romans 6 is that we have been delivered from the kingship and dominion of sin. We may be sinners, but the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is that sin does not reign over us. Jesus Christ reigns over us. Jesus Christ is Lord, and sin is not

Lord. Yet sin, if it could, would dethrone God and reign as God itself.

Remember Pharaoh's attitude in Exodus 5. When Moses said, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go," Pharaoh responded, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." He was saying, I do not recognize God or His sovereignty. His word means nothing to me; I do not have to obey Him. He is not my God. That is the attitude of sin: God does not order me around, and God has no right to tell me what to do.

That is why in Psalm 12:4 we read, “Who say with our tongue, we will prevail. Our lips are our own. Who is Lord over us?” What blasphemy! In Jeremiah 2:31, sin is so bold as to say, “We are lords. We’ll not come to thee anymore.” And do you remember the passage in Luke 19:14, where those wicked men sent word and said, “We will not have this man to reign over us”? That is the attitude of sin. Sin, if it could, would depose our sovereign God, rule and reign in our lives, and keep us under its dominion. It would deny God’s sovereignty that it might be sovereign.

The Scriptures are exceedingly clear: there is only one sovereign, and that is our God. When you and I sin, in one sense of the word, we are denying God’s sovereignty. We are saying, “God really does not have authority in this area. God really cannot tell me what to do right here, because I am going to do exactly what I want to do.” Thus, we pigeonhole God and make Him sovereign over all these other things, but not sovereign over this one. Sin denies the sovereignty of God.

Secondly, sin is also a denial of God as the chief good. Our Lord, in Matthew 19:17, says, “There is none good but one, that is, God.” God is not only good; He is the chief good, the sum and substance of all good. As God is necessarily God, likewise He is necessarily good. He is perfectly, immutably, infinitely, essentially, and necessarily good.

Sin Rejects God as the Chief Good

There is sufficient goodness in God to satisfy our every desire and longing. However, when we sin, we deny that truth. Our attitude and actions indicate that we do not believe God is sufficient to satisfy us. Every prodigal who leaves his father's house confesses that God is not good enough or sufficient, and that it is better somewhere else. Every Achan admits that God is insufficient to satisfy him; he needs his lust, covetousness, and desires to be taken care of. Every demon who forsakes God and loves the world more confesses that God is insufficient. God is not the chiefest good. Sin is better than God; my desires, lusts, and thoughts are better than God. When we sin, we deny not only God's sovereignty, but also that God is our chief good. We no longer confess and acknowledge Him to be our chief good.

Rather, we're saying that sin is what we really need to satisfy us. I don't know about you, but I tend to think God would look upon that as blasphemy. I don't think he'd be pleased with that attitude. I believe it would be insulting to him. How in the world could Joseph say, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" What is he saying? My sin would be in denial of God's sovereignty. My sin would be in denial of God as chief good. Thirdly, sin would be a denial and a challenge of God's justice.

Sin Challenges God's Justice

In the book of Malachi, chapter 2 and verse 17, here's a verse that illustrates how sin will challenge the justice of God. The Word of God says, "You have wearied the Lord with your words, yet you say, Wherein have we wearied him? When you say, Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, or where is the God of judgment?" Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord?

Look at Deuteronomy chapter 9, verse 8 and verse 9: "Also in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry with you to have destroyed you. When I was going up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink

water." In verse 8 they provoke the Lord to such an extent that God was angry and ready to destroy them.

But they're challenging God's justice. Skip down to verse 18. Moses said, "And I fell down before the Lord, as at the first forty days and forty nights I did neither eat bread nor drink water, because all of your sins which you sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And I was afraid of the anger and the hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wrath against you to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened to me at that time also." Notice what Moses said: I was afraid. I was afraid God was fixing to wipe you out. It's interesting that, at least several times, God told Moses, "Step aside."

"I'll kill all of them. And I'll make a greater nation out of you." Moses would fall down and pray, "Lord, please don't let that happen. Lord, don't do this. Lord, remember this. Lord, remember that." A few times Moses got so exasperated that he said, "Lord, kill them all." God said, "No, I'm not going to do that for my great namesake." If Moses and God ever got together, there wouldn't have been one of them left, I can assure you.

But note what he said. They challenged God. They were actually daring God to do His worst: We're going to sin. We're going to do what we want to do. And God, I challenge You to do what You say. I challenge You to kill me. I challenge You to wipe us out. What they did not understand was—thank God for His longsuffering—that one of these days God is going to take them up on that challenge. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 50. Men wickedly challenged God. Notice, beginning with verse 16. Look what God says.

“But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee? Now look, when thou sawest a thief, then thou consentest with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother. Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.”

"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. But I will reprove thee, and I will set them in order before thine eyes." God says, You keep challenging me and denying my justice. You think I am like you, but I am going to reprove you and set your sins in order before your eyes. When God does, he will demonstrate his justice. You find the same thing in Psalm 10, verses 1 through 10, and in Psalm 94.

"O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of all the earth. Render a reward to the proud. Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? How long shall they utter and speak hard things, and all the workers of iniquity do boast themselves? They yet break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage. They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, you brutish among the people, and you fools, when will you be wise?"

"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastised the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teaches man knowledge, shall he not know?" What are they saying? They commit all these sins and say, God does not know, God does not see, and God is not going to do anything. They are challenging God.

Now, what the wicked do boldly and brazenly, we do secretly, because somehow we think that we can sin and get by with it. This grieves my heart; it grieves me in my own life, and it ought to grieve you. I do not think for one minute there is a drunkard, an adulterer, or a murderer here. I think God's people are here.

But do you understand that it is not sufficient, as a child of God, to abstain from fleshly sins? We should abstain from fleshly sins. But remember that passage in 2 Corinthians 7, verse 1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Our thoughts are often wicked. It is our pride that enters in, our bitterness, our resentment, and our failure to keep our hearts and minds. Do you realize that sins of the spirit are just as equally sinful as sins of the flesh? Sin is sin. All sin is a violation of God's law. All sin grieves God. All sin quenches God, all sin vexes God. When we sin, it is an affront to God; it is, in essence, a slap in God's face, challenging Him to exercise justice.

I had a friend who is now dead. The man was about six foot four—I am not exaggerating. He had enormous shoulders. He owned a gym and was a bodybuilder. He probably had more muscles in his little finger than I had in my wrist. I have a bad back, and occasionally I have to wear a back brace. One day I saw my friend standing on the sidewalk, talking to another man, and I had not seen him in a while.

I stopped the truck, got out, and started walking toward him. He was a professing Christian. When I reached him, I put my hand on my back and said, "You know, you're really blessed today." He asked, "How's that?" I said, "When I got up this morning, I just felt like fighting and whipping somebody. I saw you standing on the street corner and thought, 'There's the man I want to whip.' I started walking over to you, and just as I touched my back, I felt this back brace. I said, 'You better be thankful I've got this back brace on, or I'll just whip you right here.'" He laughed and said, "Well, preacher, if you ever get the back brace off, please come again."

I said, "Brother, let me tell you something. You couldn't pour me all over you if I was water." But would I not have been an absolute fool to go over and try to start a fight with such a man? Yet we do that with God all the time. We slap God in the face with our sins, our sins of the spirit, and dare Him to chastise us. We dare Him to whip us. We dare Him to judge us.

Sin not only denies God's sovereignty. It not only denies God His chief good. Sin is an affront to God. It challenges God's justice and dares God to do His worst. I don't know about you, but I'm not interested in jumping on a holy, sovereign, omnipotent God, who all He has to do is withhold my breath and I can do nothing.

Sin Despises God's Goodness

Fourthly, sin despises the riches of God's goodness. Romans 2:4 says, “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds.”

Can you say the word ungrateful? Can you say the word unthankful? The goodness of God is that attribute of God where God is good to all of His creatures, even those that are unthankful and ungrateful. Thankfully, Psalm 52:1 tells us that the goodness of God endures continually. God continues to provide for us even when we sin against Him. Yet we despise the riches of His goodness.

Why did you not die last night? Why were you able to open your eyes alive this morning? It is of the Lord's mercies that we're not consumed, because His compassions, they fail not. They're new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. If God's compassions or mercies had not been given to you during the night, you would never have waken this morning. God is good.

There is no two ways about that. His goodness, of course, extends to all His creatures. But note what verse 4 says: “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness.” You know what we do? We take God for granted. We assume that God is going to give us breath, health, life, and food. We assume that God owes us. God does not owe us anything except justice, and I have news for you: I do not want that.

What do we do? We despise God's goodness. We are not thankful for traveling mercies, daily mercies, or our food. I never will forget. Years ago, Harlan Popov was in our church. He had been for fourteen years in Romanian prison. He went from our church to another church where I knew the pastor, and they took him to a restaurant. When all that food was brought before him, Popov pulled back his chair, dropped to the floor on his knees, and in a loud voice said, “Oh, God, I thank thee,” and began to pray and

thank God. Everyone in the restaurant stopped eating and turned to look. My pastor friend said, “At first I was embarrassed. And then I got embarrassed that I was embarrassed.” He said, “If I had lived on ranch for fourteen years as well, I might learn to be thankful for my daily bread.”

Think about that, folks. When we despise God's goodness, God does not instantly slap us down. Rather, He forbears. He continues to bless us. When the end of His forbearance is reached, then His longsuffering comes in. I love the word for longsuffering: makrothumia. It literally means to be great or long nostrils. When you start getting angry, your nostrils begin flaring. In that sense, God is long-nostriled. You cannot tell that His anger is building up. But after His goodness and His forbearance are despised, His longsuffering comes to an end. Then we find out that He is indeed a holy, just God. What He says is sin is a despising of His goodness. Can you imagine?

Stop and think about this. Can you imagine taking the money that God has so graciously allowed you to have, spending it on sin and that which is wicked and contrary to God? Can you think about taking your food that God has given you and being ungrateful and unthankful, or maybe even offering it to some dumb idol? That's what they did in the Bible many times. They took what God had given them, and that's why God complained against them. God said, I gave you the wine. I gave you the corn. I gave you everything. And now you turn around and give it to a dumb idol.

Instead of being thankful and grateful to God, you insult Him. Sin despises the goodness of God. Everyone knows the story of David and Bathsheba, and how Nathan came to David and gave him a story. When David was incensed, he said, "The man that had done this thing shall surely die." Nathan pointed his long bony finger and said to David, "Thou art the man. You've done it."

Sin Despises God Himself

In 2 Samuel, chapter 12, beginning with verse 5, David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, and

he shall restore the Lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, because he had no pity. And Nathan said unto David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, and I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom. And I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart out of thine house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."

Sin is not only a despisement of the Word of God; it is a despisement of God Himself. When we let our thoughts wander, our desires run rampant, and think on things we should not, first and foremost we despise God's Word, and secondly, God Himself. The word literally means to treat as vile, worthless, or despicable. When we choose sin, we treat God's Word and God Himself as vile, worthless, and despicable. In Numbers 11 and verse 20, Scripture tells us that Israel despised God in their rebellion. Numbers 15 and verse 30 says, “Because he has despised the Word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment, that soul shall be utterly cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him.” What is sin? It is a despisement of God's Word and of God.

In short, sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of His mercy, the jeer of His patience, the slight of His power, the contempt of His love, the upbraiding of His providence, the scoff of His promise, the unbelief of His word, the denial of His authority, the despisement of His person, and the reproach of His wisdom. Sin is against God, a personal God.

Applications: Remembering God's Majesty

How can we not come to the same conclusion that Joseph did: How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? We must remember the august, majestic, and sovereign God the next time we consider sinning. Sin does not just happen. People say, "I didn't

mean to sin. It just happened." That's hogwash. If there is a hundred-dollar bill lying down and I come up to steal it, I see it and think about it before I take it. If someone says, "I didn't mean to run off with that man's wife. It just happened," that is not true. You thought about it before you ever did it. There is no such thing as a sudden sin.

The next time the thought of sin comes through our mind, we must understand that sin is an insult to the sovereign God of heaven and earth—an attack upon His person, His power, and His position. It is a despising of Himself and His Word. We must not only consider what sin will do to me, my family, or my church; we must consider what our sin will do to the sovereign God of heaven and earth.

How can we do this great wickedness and sin against God? The awfulness of sin is seen in its hatred of God. Romans 8 says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." The word enmity is a strong word for hatred.

Our minds are supposed to be renewed. We are to have the mind of Christ and his word in our minds. But when we reject and despise that word, we return to an old carnal mind. It is hatred of God. That is why God said, “You despise my word. You despise me.” In Jeremiah 44:4, he said, “Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early, and sending them, and saying, Listen, oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate.”

Let me spell it out: God hates sin, and sin hates God. Every gardener hates weeds, and every gardener hates them even more when they are in his garden. I came to this conclusion a long time ago: If sinless perfection is a heresy—and it is—I believe an equal heresy is thinking that we have to sin. When John wrote, “My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not,” he continued, “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

The Bible says, “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy

commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." While I certainly do not agree with the theology of Dwight L. Moody, I do agree with one thing he did. He wrote in the flyleaf of his Bible, "Either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book."

We have to come to this realization if we want to live holy, godly lives, live like Christ, and have the mind of Christ. We must come to the same attitude Joseph had: "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" I do not care what the sin is. It does not have to be adultery or murder. It can be bitterness, resentfulness, gossip, pride, arrogance, or any sin. We have to realize that sin is against God. If we want to live a holy, godly life, we have to know what our sin does to our God.

I love that passage in John 8, I believe it is verse 29, where our Lord said, "Father, I know that thou hearest me always. For I do only those things which please you." Would to God that we would learn to pray in our daily lives, "O Father, help me to do only those things which please you." We can do that only when we have the same attitude toward sin that God does, and when we understand that, when we sin, we sin against God. It is a despisement of Him and of His Word. How can we profess to love Him in one breath and then turn and do that which is contrary to Him in the next? How can we say, "Yes, Father, I love you, but..."?

I do not think I would make my wife happy if I told her I loved her but was going to see another woman the following week. I do not think she would really believe that I genuinely loved her. If you take the attitude, "Lord, I love you, but I am going to have my way in this," consider this illustration.

Illustration and Conclusion

Years ago, there was a man in our church who had two children. We had a Christian school, and his children were doing poorly. I called him in and talked to him. He was a hunter and a fisherman. He worked hard and made good money, but his son took the attitude, "Well, a real man only hunts and fishes; he does not have to study." I kept calling him in, explaining things to him, and

talking to him. Finally, we had to expel his children, so I called him back in one last time.

He stood in front of my desk; he did not sit. I explained church discipline and what needed to be done. I gave him chapter and verse for everything I said. I opened the Bible and showed him. When I finished, he said words I have never forgotten: "Pastor, I know you are right. I know the Bible is right. But I am going to have to handle this my own way."

Instead of facing church discipline and letting us work with the children and the family, they left the church. The daughter turned out to be basically a prostitute. The son turned out to be a drunkard and a dopehead. That husband and wife had to sleep at night with a loaded pistol by their bed to protect themselves from their own son, who threatened to kill them innumerable times. They had to call the law and have their own son arrested a number of times.

A young man in his early twenties got drunk and went to sleep in his car, parked on a railroad track. After the train went by, they gathered up the remaining pieces and identified him only by his teeth.

He lost his family because he, in essence, despised God and God's Word. That's what sin does: it is not just what it does to us; it is what it does to God. How, then, can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We ask, Lord, that You make us holy, godly, and heavenly. Conform us to the image of Jesus Christ, and help us never to forget this verse. Sear it into our minds: How can we do this great wickedness and sin against our God? Give us grace to serve Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 13

How Do We Love the Lord?

February 13, 2011

Introduction and Reading of the Great Commandment

Let us open our Bibles to the book of Matthew, chapter 22, beginning with verse 35. Notice what our Lord says in answer to the lawyer's question: “Then one of them who was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

I want to ask and answer a question today: How do we love the Lord with all of our heart? We have been commanded to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and body. Our text is exceedingly clear upon this; therefore, there is no excuse for anyone failing to obey this command.

The Command Repeated in Scripture

Moreover, the Lord repeats this command in Mark 12 and verse 30: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.” And then again in Luke chapter 10 and verse 27: “He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself.”

So three times in the New Testament He has said this. Turn back in your Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 6, while holding Matthew 22. In Deuteronomy chapter 6 and verse 4, you will find what is known as the Shema Israel. It is something that goes simply like this: “Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad, Hear O Israel, The Lord our God is one.” Deuteronomy 6 and verse 4 reads, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.” But note the next verse: “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” So it really does not matter if we look in the Old Testament or in the New Testament.

The command is the same: we are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, and souls. Several important questions arise. The first one is this: How do we accomplish that task? How do we know whether or not we love the Lord with all our heart? Is there a standard of measurement? Can I determine, or can anyone else determine, whether or not either I or you love the Lord with all our heart and with all our soul?

We are obligated to love the Lord as He commands us simply because He is our Creator, our Redeemer, our Lord, and our Savior. Those who are unconverted are still under the obligation to obey God. They may not have the ability or power, but they are still under the obligation to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul, and body. Simply because fallen man has lost his power and ability to obey does not mean that God has lost His right to command. First, let us answer this question regarding loving the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and mind.

You would notice, I hope, that as I quoted from Mark 12:30, the word strength is also added. You will also find it in Luke 10:27. In Deuteronomy 6:5, the word might is added.

Scholarly Interpretations of Loving God

Some scholars interpret this in a very general sense: “Thou shalt love him with all the faculties or powers. Thou shalt love him supremely more than all other beings and things and with all ardor possible. To love him with the heart is to fix the affection supremely upon him more strongly than on anything else and to be willing to give up all that we hold dear at his command.” That was one author trying to tell us what it means to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and body.

Others break down each individual part. To love the Lord with the heart refers to the affections; with the soul, to the life; and with the mind, to the intellect. Thus, when we set our affections upon Him, we love Him more than life, and we learn to think His thoughts after Him as they are revealed in His Word.

Some will take this very generally and say, here it is in a nutshell. But scholars such as Adam Clarke divide and explain it in a way that makes it almost impossible for us to conceive what it means to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul, and body. Clarke asks, “But what is implied in loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, strength, and when may a man be said to do this?”

First, “He loves God with all of his heart, who loves nothing in comparison of him, and nothing but in reference to him, who is ready to give up, do, or suffer anything in order to please and glorify him, who has in his heart neither love nor hatred, hope nor fear, inclination nor aversion, desire nor delight, but as they relate to God and are regulated by him.”

Second, “He loves God with all his soul, or rather with all of his life, who is ready to give up his life for his sake, to endure all sorts of torments, and to be deprived of all kinds of comforts rather than to dishonor God, who employs life with all of its comforts and conveniences to glorify God in, by, and through all, to whom life and death are nothing but as they come from and lead to God.”

From this divine principle sprang the blood of the martyrs, which became the seed of the church. They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb, and loved not their life unto death.

Third, “He loves God with all of his strength, who exerts all the powers of his body and soul in the service of God, who for the glory of his Maker spares neither labor nor cost, who sacrifices his time, body, health, ease for the honor of God, his divine master, who employs in his service all his goods, talents, power, credit, authority, and influence.”

Fourth, “He loves God with all of his mind, his intellect, who applies himself only to know God and His holy will, who receives with submission, gratitude, and pleasure the sacred truths which God has revealed to man, who studies no art nor science but as far as it is necessary for the service of God, and uses it at all times to promote His glory, who forms no projects nor designs but in reference to God, and the interest of mankind, who banishes from his understanding and memory every useless, foolish and dangerous thought together with every idea which has any tendency to defile his soul, or to turn it”

He who sees God in all things, thinks of Him at all times, having his mind continually fixed upon God and acknowledging Him in his ways, who begins, continues, and ends all his thoughts, words, and works to the glory of His name—this is the person who loves God with all his heart, life, strength, and intellect. He is crucified to the world, and the world to him.

He lives, yet not he, but Christ lives in him. He beholds, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord and is changed to the same image from glory to glory, simply and constantly looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of his faith. He receives continual supplies of enlightening and sanctifying grace and is thus fitted for every good word and work. O glorious state, far, far beyond this description, which comprises an ineffable communion between the ever-blessed Trinity and the soul of man.

What are your thoughts when Adam Clarke tells you who the man was that really loved God with all of his heart, mind, soul, and being? When I read that, I thought, There aren't many. You almost

think that he is talking about perfection. That may be what it should be, but none of us are ever going to be perfect until we reach glory.

Defining Strength and Might

Before showing how applicable this truth is from Scripture, let us briefly consider the words strength and might. We are not only to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, and mind, but with our strength and might as well. When I think of strength, I think of what David said in Psalm 103, verse 1: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name." Loving the Lord with all our strength means that everything we are and everything we have enters into loving Him, praising Him, and worshiping Him. God is worthy of all our strength, praise, glory, and worship. What about the word might? So many times we say that strength and might are exactly the same thing, but not necessarily.

Because the word might is used a little differently in Scripture at times. This is added to loving the Lord with all of our souls, our hearts, and our minds. In 1 Chronicles 29, beginning with verse 1, look what David says: "Furthermore, David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great that is building the temple for the Lord. For the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God."

Now look carefully at verse 2: "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, the gold for the things to be made of gold, the silver for the things of silver, the brass for the things of brass, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood, onyx stones and stones to be set, glistering stones and of diverse colors, and of all manner of precious stones and marble stones in abundance." Note what David said: "Now I have prepared with all my what? Might."

What was he talking about? Let me put it in one simple word: money. He talks about all the gold, silver, brass, and precious stones that he had laid up for the temple of God. The word might can also refer to money. Many who proclaim to love the Lord with

all their might refuse to love Him with their tithes, offerings, and gifts. So I submit to you that loving the Lord with all of our might includes all of the resources that we have available to us.

We understand that we have been commanded to love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, and soul, but here is a question: What is it to love the Lord? What does it mean to love the Lord? Is loving the Lord a warm, tingling feeling? Is loving the Lord getting goosebumps as I think about Him, or the hair standing up on the back of my neck, or getting that crawling sensation upon my skin? Is loving the Lord withdrawing from the world and living the life of an ascetic? Go back with me to Deuteronomy chapter 6. I want you to see the context and, from the Bible, what it is to love the Lord. Let us begin reading with verse 1.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (KJV)

Love Defined as Obedience in the Old Testament

> Now, these are the commandments the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, watch carefully, that you might do them in the land whether you go to possess it, that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments which I command thee, thou and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth of milk and honey. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Now watch, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind

"Them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the post of thy house, and on thy gates." This passage began with the

commandments of God, the Word of God. Then, after saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," it says that you are to teach them to all of your children. Mark 12 gives the answer to the lawyer in Matthew 22, and it is very informative because our Lord gives the answer to the lawyer there.

But look how He prefaces His answer in Mark 12, verse 29: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." The preface to His answer is the Shema Israel mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:4.

What is our Lord doing? First, He is supporting the law as it was given in the Word of God. He is also instructing us and telling us, This is how we love the Lord. There does exist a covenantal relationship between God and His people. That covenant existed in the Old Testament, and that covenant exists in the New Testament. The covenant that binds us is revealed in His Word. Thus, our Lord quotes the Shema Israel in Mark chapter 12 and verse 29.

What He is teaching us is this: We have one Lord, one Word, one faith, and one baptism. I want to take the Bible and show you from the Old Testament and then from the New Testament what it really means to love the Lord. The Bible shows us what it really means to love the Lord. There is indeed a standard of measurement, so that you may know whether or not you love the Lord and whether anyone else loves the Lord. Deuteronomy 30:16 says, "In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply."

“And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land where thou goest to possess it.” Now, look carefully at verse 16: “in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God.” Well, how do you love the Lord thy God? He didn't clarify it. “To walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments.” That's loving the Lord.

Look in your Bibles at Deuteronomy 13, verse 20. “Now thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham to Isaac and to Jacob, to give to them.” Now notice what he calls loving the Lord in verse 20. It's obeying Him. It's cleaving unto Him. So he tells you in verse 16 it's keeping His commandments. Now in verse 20 he tells you it's obeying Him and cleaving unto Him.

If you would turn right over to the book of Joshua, chapter 22, and look at verse 5. “But take diligent heed to do the commandment of the law, which Moses, a servant of the Lord, charged you.” What's the next phrase? “To love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart, with all your soul.” Isn't that interesting? What does he say? What does serving Him with all your heart and your soul mean? It's keeping His commandments. What is loving Him? It is keeping His commandments. If you'd skip down to verse 11, Joshua 23, verse 11.

Look, if you would please, at verse 11: “Take good heed, therefore, into yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God.” But go back to verse 8: “But cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day.” What is cleaving to the Lord? According to Deuteronomy and Joshua 22, cleaving unto Him is obeying Him and keeping His law.

What I want to show you is this: the New Testament is just as plain as the Old Testament. Listen carefully: love is obedience. It is not sentimentalism, emotionalism, feeling, traditionalism, or anything else; it is simply obedience. You do not have to turn there, but let me quote Romans 13:10: “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” What is love? Love is the fulfilling of the law.

Love Defined as Obedience in the New Testament

Now go in your Bibles to the book of John, chapter 14. I want you to see this, because this is going to be very important when I make

the application. Notice John chapter 14 and verse 15. In fact, we will look at a number of verses here. Our Lord said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” If you love Me, keep My commandments. What is loving Christ? It is keeping His commandments.

Look at verse 21, John 14, verse 21: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” Who is it that loves Christ? He that has His commandments and keeps them. Look at verse 23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words.” Look at verse 24: “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.” Is that not simple? Our Lord said, if you love Me, you will obey Me; if you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Our Lord said, “You want to know who loves Me? It is the man who has My word and does it. You want to know who does not love Me? It is the one who does not keep My commandments.”

The New Testament says exactly that same thing that the Old Testament says. First John 5, verses 2 and 3, says, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments.” By this we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments. What is loving God according to verse 2? It is keeping His commandments. Verse 3 says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments do not grieve us.” So what is the love of God? It is keeping His commandments. That is simple. This is the love of God.

Go back to First John, chapter 2, and look at verse 3: “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” Let me stop right there. “Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” Does keeping His commandments save us? No, we are not saved by works. But this is how we know whether or not we have been genuinely saved by grace: His grace will lead us to obey and keep His word. “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them”—what does He say? He is the one that knows Me.

Watch verse 4. In fact, let us read verses 3 and 4 together: “And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” Where does that leave most church members who say that they love Christ, and yet their lives are lives of total disobedience to the Word of God? Our Lord says, “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Biblical Love is Active and Demonstrated

In Second John 1:6, we read, “And this is love, that we walk after His commandments.” Biblical love is always active. Biblical love always evidences itself and manifests itself in service, ministry, and sacrifice.

Now look in verse John 3 and verse 16. Look what God says: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Remember what the word perceive means. It means to comprehend, to understand, to grab hold of. Look carefully: hereby understand we, perceive we, the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.

Not because He merely told us He loved us. Not because He said, “I have feelings for you.” Not because He had sensations and emotions. No. Hereby perceive we the love of God because He actually did something. He ministered. He sacrificed. He laid down His life for us. Here is one application: He said we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. If we say that we love the brethren, it will not be feelings, sensations, or emotionalism.

Look what he said in verse 17. After saying that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, he said, “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” Go back to verse 17: “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shut up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.”

If I see Robert hungry, he tells me he is hungry and asks me for food, and I happen to have some, yet say, “Brother, I tell you what. I am going to be praying for you. I will pray the Lord will lead you to a job somewhere, or somewhere you can find or harvest food,” while I have it, what does God say? If I profess that I love the Lord while disobeying His commandments, very obviously I do not love the Lord. We are to love not just in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth.

There have to be actions. There has to be something real, something obvious that can be manifested and demonstrated. So here is what I am trying to answer: How do I love the Lord with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul?

Understand what I have already told you. Love is obedience. Love is always demonstrated and manifested; genuine, biblical love is always evidenced by what is real. Since love is obedience, it has to be connected with God's Word and God's commands. If I say that I love the Lord, then obviously I must obey Him. Loving the Lord is not what most people think it is or what most people believe.

We live in a feeling-oriented society. Watch most of the television preachers and ministries, and you will understand that. People say, “Did you feel the Lord?” or, “I felt the Lord.” What? God is spirit. You may have had an emotional response to faith or perception, but you did not feel the Lord, because God is spirit.

The usual teaching on this is a bunch of religious bunk. It is junk and worthless. Think about what it is to love the Lord. Can we cuddle up to the Lord? Can I feel all warm and fuzzy with the Lord? Can I get teary-eyed and sentimental with Him? Can I have an emotional high with the Lord? Can I jump and shout and have some type of experience? Can I do all these things and call it love?

You may try some of those things, and in one or two of them you may succeed. But you may not call it love, or at least you may not call it biblical love. For biblical love is obedience.

Look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 6, beginning with verse 15. Remember, I am asking you this question: Can you cuddle up to the Lord? Can you get all warm and fuzzy with Him

and call this love? First Timothy chapter 6, verses 15 and 16: "Which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting."

Well, there goes your cuddling and warm fuzzies with the Lord: "Whom no man can approach unto." You may weep, cry, wail, and scream that you love Him, but that does not mean that you do. Your emotionalism and sentimentalism are worthless. Emotionalism and sentimentalism do not equate to biblical love.

Now look in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 6. I am still answering the question, What does it mean to love the Lord? I have already shown you that love is obedience and that love is always manifested, demonstrated, and evidenced. Notice what he said in Hebrews chapter 6, verse 10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love. Here it is: real, genuine love, which you have showed toward His name. How did you show love toward His name? In that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. Do you remember what our Lord said in Matthew 25:40? "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Since love is the fulfilling of the law, the way that we love God with all of our hearts, with all our minds, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our might, is to keep His law toward each other and toward those who are outside of the faith.

I have gone through the Old Testament and the New Testament, showing where love is obedience and where biblical love is really manifested and demonstrated in evidence. Hebrews 6 shows that loving the Lord is ministering to the saints. I want to love the Lord

with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul. How do I do that? By obeying Him in every sphere and every area of my life.

Practical Applications of Loving God

When I love my wife the way God commanded me, I love the Lord. He forbids adultery, fornication, and all uncleanness, yet He commands me in Proverbs 5:18, "Let my fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the wife of thy youth." I am to find my joy, fulfillment, and satisfaction in the wife God has given me, and I am to treat her the way He tells me to treat her. Malachi 2:14 says, "Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." When I love my wife with a biblical love, when I love her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, I am obeying Christ.

I am fulfilling His law and demonstrating, evidencing, and manifesting that I love God with all my heart, soul, and mind in that area. Likewise, when my wife submits to me, loves me, and helps me in the way that God is ordained, she is expressing her love to Christ. In Ephesians 5, the wife is to be a picture of the church and the church's submission to Jesus Christ.

Love, then, is obedience to God. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments. When I love my wife the way God tells me to love her, I love the Lord. When she loves me the way God commands her, she loves the Lord. When I honor my parents as God commanded me—when I obey, submit, honor, support, sustain, encourage, and esteem them highly in the Lord—I love Him.

Exodus 20:12 says, "Honor thy father and thy mother." When you get to Matthew 15 and Mark 7, our Lord elucidates and expands that. He shows that it means supporting them and taking care of them in their old age, when they cannot take care of themselves.

Let me tell you something: you can always get more from an elderly parent. By "get more," I mean more cooperation and more help, by always encouraging and honoring them. I took my mother to dinner innumerable times. I would pick her up. My sister would

tell me, “She’s very weak today. You’ll just about have to pick her up and get her in the car yourself.” I would walk her down to the car and tell her, “Oh, you’re doing such a fine job. You’re doing a great job.”

“Now, Mother, can you do this? Oh, I know you can.” And guess what? She would do it. Afterward I would say, “Man, you’re all right. You’ll be running down the road next week,” or something like that. She was just as happy as she could be, and she would help. All I am trying to show you is this: when I love and honor her, I am loving the Lord, because that is exactly what God has commanded me.

Here is another area to think about. When I tithe in obedience to the Lord, according to Deuteronomy 26:17, I am avouching that the Lord is my God. God says, “Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes and his commandments and his judgments and to hearken into his voice.” If you read Deuteronomy 26, it is all about the tithes. When you go up to give your tithes, you are confessing and acknowledging that the Lord is your God.

The interesting thing is that the word “avouch” means literally to say in one’s heart. Think about that. What I give when I tithe, I am saying in my heart, “I recognize the Lord. I love him. I am obeying him. I am doing that which he has commanded me to do.” When I refuse to steal, defraud, cheat, swindle, and lie, I am evidencing and manifesting the fact that I love the Lord. When I give cheerfully, lovingly, and generously to the Lord, again I am manifesting that I love the Lord.

How can that be so? You remember the eighth commandment in Exodus 20:15: “Thou shalt not steal.” The positive, according to Ephesians 4:28, is this: “Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” The opposite of “Thou shalt not steal” is to be an honest individual, working with your hands that which is good, so that you may have to give to him that needeth. This shows that you are not selfish.

When I refuse to lie, cheat, defraud, and steal, I am evidencing the fact that I love the Lord. When I am willing to help someone who is a real, genuine, needful object of help, including biblical need, I am evidencing the fact that I love the Lord. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, nor of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” What I give according to the Word of God, as I obey, evidences the fact that I love the Lord.

You remember Jesus Christ in Proverbs 8 is wisdom personified. In verse 17 He said, “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.” How do I know that I love Him? I keep His commandments. How do I know that He loves me? He has given me grace and mercy to keep those commandments and obey Him. I love the Lord with all my heart, mind, and soul. When I love my Christian brethren, let me show you.

Look in your Bibles at 1 John 3:14: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. I realize that some brethren are not easy to love. There are personality differences. But if someone is a genuine Christian, we still love them.

We may not necessarily like everything about them. We may not necessarily always enjoy being around them. But we're going to help them, and we're going to take care of them, and we're going to act biblically and scripturally toward them regardless. We know we've passed from death into life because we love the brethren. And then he said this: “He that loveth and honors a brother abideth in death.”

In 1 John 4, verses 7 and 8, the Bible says, “Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God, and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.” He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. How do we love one another?

In 1 John 5, verse 2, it says, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.” So that means simply this: How do I know that I love the brethren? Because I act implicitly toward them. I may never hug Ron's neck. I may never squall and cry on his shoulder and wipe my nose on him, and squall, “I love you, I love you, I love you.” I may never do that. But if I treat him biblically, if I honor his family, if I honor him, and if I act toward him the way God tells me to act, I love him, because love is the fulfilling of the law.

Now, 1 John 4, verses 20 and 21, says, “If a man say, I love God, and hated his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.” So that means I'm obligated to act biblically toward any brother. That's how I love him. It doesn't mean I like his tonal pattern. It doesn't mean I like his habits. It doesn't mean I like a lot of things about him. But I'm going to act biblically toward him. I'm going to act scripturally toward him.

As Christians, we must love our husbands, wives, neighbors, and brethren the way Christ commands us if we wish to demonstrate and manifest our love for Christ. If we do not love as He has commanded, then we do not love Him. You could reverse all of this. If I run around on Alice and commit fornication and adultery, I am not only demonstrating that I do not love her; I am demonstrating that I do not love Christ. If I begin to lie, cheat, steal, swindle, and defraud, I am not only failing to love my brethren; I am not loving Christ, because I am not obeying Him. Love is the fulfilling of the law. When I hate sin, wickedness, disobedience, and rebellion, and refuse to participate in such iniquity, I love the Lord.

Hating Evil as Part of Loving God

How can that be so? Because He has commanded me in Psalm 97:10, "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." He has also commanded me in Amos 5:15, "hate the evil and love the good." It is impossible to love the Lord without at the same time hating everything contrary to the Lord. Consider these verses: Exodus 20:6, "and

showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." What is loving the Lord? Keeping His commandments. Deuteronomy 5:10 repeats, "and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." Deuteronomy 19:9 says, "If thou shalt keep all these commandments, to do them which I command thee this day, to love the Lord thy God, and to walk ever in his ways, then shalt thou add three cities more for thee besides these three," loving the Lord according to the scripture, as walking in

"His ways, and obeying him." In 2 Chronicles 34, verse 31, King Josiah makes a covenant. Listen to what he said: "And the King Josiah stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and with all his soul to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book." What is walking after the Lord with all your heart and all your soul? What is loving the Lord with all your heart and all your soul? It is obeying Him in every area of your life.

There is a measuring stick, a measuring rod. You ask me, How much do I love the Lord? My answer is, How much do you obey the Lord? What is the measure of my love? It is obedience—obedience to the Word of God. Your talk is worthless. Your emotions are fickle. Your sentimentality is useless. Obedience, and obedience alone, evidences whether or not you love the Lord.

Conclusion and Prayer

Christ could not have said it any plainer than He did in John 14, verse 21: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." If I want to love Him with all my heart, with all my mind, and with all my soul, then in every area and every sphere of my life I seek to be biblical and obedient and walk according to His Word and His truth. For he that hath His commandments and keepeth them, he is the one who loves Him.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your truth, grace, mercy, and kindness. Teach us, Lord, to love Thee with all of our hearts, minds, soul, bodies,

strength, and might by being obedient and walking according to Thy law. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 14

Love for God

August 12, 2012

Prerequisites for Loving the Lord

Introduction and Review

This message follows the one that I brought this morning and deals basically with the same subject. This morning I preached the message on what it means to love the Lord with all of our hearts. I will take a few moments and review, but tonight the message is the prerequisites for loving the Lord.

In Psalm 18:1, David says, “I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.” In Psalm 116:1 he says, “I love the Lord because he had heard my voice and my supplication.”

I have preached many times on loving the Lord. I pointed out this morning that loving the Lord is actually obedience, for the Bible says that love is indeed the fulfilling of the law. We sang this in our song this morning. You remember I quoted from John 14:21, where our Lord said, “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” And in John 14:24 He said,

"He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Then we went to 1 John 5:3, where the Word of God says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and they are not grievous unto us."

Then we turn to 1 John 5, verses 3 and 4, where the Bible says, "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

The Central Purpose of Life

It is not my intention tonight to re-preach the message that I preached this morning. However, I can assure you of one thing: many of the messages, especially one like I preached this morning, bear repeating over and over, simply because we are so forgetful in our lives and so easily distracted from our central purpose in life. And if you ask, What in the world is our central purpose in life?

I hope you know the answer. What is the chief end of man? It is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Certainly, one of the ways that we glorify God and enjoy Him is by loving Him the way He demands. Let me rephrase that: not only by loving Him the way He demands, but by loving Him the way He deserves to be loved. He is indeed worthy of all honor, love, praise, and glory.

I have often asked this question of many people because there are so many who profess to be Christians, yet their hearts and minds are so foreign to God, His Word, His truth, and His principles. But my question is this: If you do not love Him now, in time and in history, what makes you think you are going to love Him in eternity? What makes people think they can live their lives in total ignorance of God and total neglect of God and somehow, suddenly, when they die, they are going to be super-spiritual, loving everything they hated? No, the truth of the matter is this: If we do not enjoy the presence of God now, what makes us think we are going to enjoy His presence in eternity?

Commands to Love the Lord

As you read through the Bible, it may surprise you how many commands there are to love the Lord. I will tell you something else that should surprise you: how many commands there are for God's people to love Him. Some of them I used this morning. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deuteronomy 6:20 says that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, obey His voice, and cleave unto Him, "for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." Then Deuteronomy 30:6 says, "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart."

God will circumcise our hearts and the hearts of our seed, that we may love Him with all of our heart and with all of our soul, that we may live. Deuteronomy 30:16 says, "In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways and keep His commandments, His statutes and His judgments." Psalm 31:23 says, "Oh, love the Lord, all ye his saints, for the Lord preserved the faithful and plentifully rewarded the proud doer." Have you ever asked yourself why God has to command us to love Him if we are His children, if we are His people? Psalm 97:10 says, "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." He, God, preserved the souls of His saints and delivered them out of the hands of the wicked.

The Problem of Falling into Sin

Let me tell you what really brought about this particular message. Recently, I heard of a number of Christians, some of whom I knew, or thought I knew, at least rather intimately, who had fallen headlong into sin, disobedience, and rebellion. I will be absolutely honest: a couple of them genuinely shocked me. I was shocked because I believed these individuals were far more grounded in the Word than they were, and that they had far more character and integrity than evidently they really and truly did have. Some of the sins were absolutely stupid—not merely stupid, but blatantly contrary to the Word of God. When I thought about these individuals whom I had known for years and cherished as brethren in the Lord, I immediately thought of Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a

man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The part I emphasized for my own heart was, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Do you realize that, if it were not for the grace of God, you could fall just as easily as anyone else? So could I. We are sinners. We are wicked. Realizing that I am a sinner, that my flesh is wicked, and that, except for the grace of God, that could be me, I saw this problem:

I do not want to sin, fall, or grieve the heart of my Heavenly Father. So the question I had to ask myself is this: How do I fortify and strengthen myself, that I might not sin against God?

Fortifying Against Sin

You remember what He said in Jeremiah 44:4? God said, "Oh, do not that abominable thing which I hate." God hates sin. God does not want us to sin. Do you remember what He said in 1 John 2:1? "My little children, these things I write unto you that ye sin not." He wrote these things to keep us from sinning. Then He went on to say, "But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." So how do we fortify ourselves so that we do not sin against our Heavenly Father?

There are probably a multitude of answers to that question. One answer would be fortifying ourselves with Scripture. Do you remember what David said in Psalm 119, verses 9 through 11? "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word, with my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Surely we could fortify ourselves with Scripture. We must not forsake the assembling of ourselves together.

Moreover, the Bible tells us that we should be in constant and continual prayer, praying without ceasing. There is fellowship with the saints, and there is also the giving and receiving of biblical rebukes and admonition. There are a multitude of answers to the question, How do we fortify ourselves against sinning against God?

What I want to do tonight is what I basically did this morning, in one sense of the word. I want to focus on one answer: loving the Lord with all our hearts. I believe that if we love the Lord with all our hearts, all these other things I mentioned will automatically fall in line, and we will automatically be doing them. So how in the world do we love Him with all our heart?

First Prerequisite: A Holy Determination

First of all, we have to understand that He deserves to be loved with all of our heart. He deserves all of our devotion and all of our honor, praise, and worship. In order to accomplish that task of loving Him, there are two prerequisites. The first one is found in Psalm 18:1. Notice first of all a holy determination. Look what David said: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength."

David expresses a truth in this verse that is needed in each of our lives: a holy determination to love the Lord. Now note what David states very clearly. He says, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." He does not say, "I want to love Thee," or, "I'll try to love Thee," or, "I hope I can love Thee." No. He gives a dedicated determination. He says, "I will." There are no doubts, no questions, and no maybes. He is determined to love the Lord by saying, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength." There is then not only a verbal determination, but a volitional determination as well when he says, "I will love Thee."

The word love here in the Hebrew is the word rakam, which literally means to love, to love deeply, and to love with all feelings. In other words, David is saying that he is determined to love the Lord in the way that He should be loved.

This is a holy determination. How can we use the word holy? Because our God is holy, and anything connected with Him has to be holy as well. Revelation 15:4 declares, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for only thou art holy." Everything that we have to do with our God must be done in holiness, because everything that God is and everything that God does is absolute holiness.

We understand the truth of 1 John 4:19, where the Scripture says, “We love him.” Why? “Because he first loved us.” There would be no way in the world that we could love Him without Him first loving us. Moreover, stop and think about this: even though David has said, “I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength,” and although there is this holy determination, and although you and I may use those same words, we must understand that without Him we can do nothing. Our Lord said in John 15:5, “Without me ye can do nothing.”

Is loving our heavenly Father something? If it is without Him, you cannot do it. You have to have the grace and the mercy of God.

There is a truth that David gives us in Psalm 18:1 when he says, “I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.” This is a truth that you and I need to remember and rehearse over and over in our minds. We need to keep it there constantly. It is a very simple truth: love is an act of the will.

Love as an Act of the Will Illustrated

This is true in relationship to our God, and it is also true in relationship to others. Years ago, a man came into my office for counseling. The interesting thing is that when most people come for counseling, they really do not want counseling. What they want is for you to put your stamp of approval upon what they have already determined to do. That is what they genuinely want. This man had determined that he was going to divorce his wife.

There was no biblical reason for him to do so; he just wanted to get rid of her. I told him, “Sir, the Scripture says that husbands are to love their wives. God requires you, God commands you, and you are obligated to love your wife.” He said, “Well, I just do not love her.” I asked, “Is she still living in the house with you?” He said yes. I said, “Would you say, then, that she is your closest neighbor, since no one else lives in the house with you?” He said, “I guess so.” I replied, “That is wonderful, because God says that you are to love your neighbor as yourself.” He said, “I do not even know that I could love her as a neighbor.” I said, “You do not.”

I said, would you counter an enemy? He said, of course. Yes, she is an enemy. I said, great. The Scripture says, "Love your enemies." You cannot get out of it. I do not care if she is your neighbor or your enemy; she is still your wife, and God commands you to love her. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself, What in the world is happening between men and women?

Some have been married thirty and forty years, and they are getting divorces. I never will forget hearing years ago about an old man who was ninety-two. The woman was ninety. They were standing before the judge, getting a divorce. The judge said, "You are ninety-two, your wife is ninety, you have been married seventy-five years, and you are getting a divorce. Why?" The old man said, "We wanted a divorce years ago, but we decided to stay together for our children's sake. Our baby, who is sixty-five, just got married last month, and we want to get our divorce." The truth of the matter is that if you live together with somebody that long, it seems to me you could make it a few more years. But why are there so many divorces?

The answer is this: We have never really understood that love, first of all, is an act of the will, something we choose to do, and something we must do on an absolute daily basis. When God commands us to love, He is commanding our wills. It is true that oftentimes emotions are involved, but these emotions may follow; they are never to lead. We love Him because He first loved us. Consider David's determination: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." First and foremost, love is an act of the will.

Does God command husbands to love their wives? Yes. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives." That is a command. God is not commanding feelings; He is commanding your will. You do not command feelings or emotions; you command the will. Does God command us to love our neighbor? Yes. Leviticus 19 says, "Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy neighbor: thou shalt rebuke him in any wise." James 2:8 says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Does God command us to love Him? The answer is yes.

I read to you a number of verses and quoted some of them, but listen. In Deuteronomy 6:5 and Deuteronomy 11:1, God commands

us to love Him. That command to love Him is repeated five times in the book of Deuteronomy alone. So when God says we are to love our wives, our neighbors, or God, He is not commanding feelings, sentiments, abstract concepts, or ethereal desires. He is commanding the will: "This is what I am commanding you."

When God says, "Husbands, love your wives," I love my wife because I choose to love my wife. Stop and think about that. There is no such thing in reality as falling in love and falling out of love. No, you choose to love. I love my wife because I choose to love my wife. I love my neighbor because I choose to love my neighbor. I love my God because I choose to love Him, since He worked in my heart. Love is an act of the will. It is a choice. It is a determination. When I say I have chosen to love my wife, it also means I have willed to love my wife.

Are there emotions involved? Yes. She makes me happy, pleases me, satisfies me; I wish to be with her, and I wish to have her around me. People sometimes ask when I am coming to a meeting, "Is your wife coming?" I just laugh and say, "Yes." I take her everywhere with me. I want her with me.

I never will forget one of my dearest friends, who used to hunt coons. One night I asked him, "Randall, why do you hunt coons? You do not eat them, you cannot sell them, and you have to stay out all night chasing them. Why do you hunt them?" He said, "Well, I like to be with my friends, and I like to hear the dogs bark." I said, "Let me tell you something. I would much rather be with my wife than with a bunch of men out in the woods listening to dogs."

I am not criticizing coon hunting. I am just saying that, for me, I choose to be with her. I wish to be around her, and I refuse to forsake her. There may be plenty of other women, and they may be more beautiful or more handsome, but I choose not to be with them or around them. Love is an act of the will.

My choice and my will in loving my wife always have both a positive and a negative connotation. You will see this in relation to God and to our neighbors as well. If I choose to love the brethren and my neighbors, as the Father has commanded me, the command is therefore directed to my will. Do I have affection

toward the brethren? Yes. I enjoy being around them. But these are the effects or results of my love.

God commands the will. There are always positive and negative connotations to our love. If I choose to love the brethren as God commands, that means I prefer them above any others. People have told me, "Brother Weaver, you may not understand this, but I would rather be around my church family than my own physical family." I do understand that, especially if your physical family is wicked, ungodly, and unconverted. I would much rather be around people of like mind than a physical relative who could care less about Jesus Christ, the Word of God, and the truth of God.

When I choose to love the brethren, I am going to protect them and promote them. I will never betray them to the enemies of God. When the Covenanters were meeting in the fields, the king's troops came for the pastor, and they knew it would mean instant and immediate death. Yet men stepped forward and claimed to be the pastor, knowing they would be immediately killed. They did so to protect their pastor, so that he could continue preaching the Word of God.

In the average church today, the average church member would sell his preacher down the drain for a hundred-dollar bill. I am serious. There is no understanding of this simple fact: if we love the brethren, we are not to betray them to their enemies or to the enemies of God.

What did David say? In Psalm 139 he said, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? Am I not grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." We cannot love the brethren as we are commanded to love them without at the same time despising and detesting that which would destroy them. Make up your mind that if you are going to love the brethren, you will be faithful and true. It may cost you.

If you love your wife as Christ loved the church, you will be willing to give yourself for her. He laid down His life; we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Therefore, there must be a

holy determination in loving our wives, a holy determination in loving our brethren, and a holy determination in loving the Lord.

We must understand that we have chosen Him as our Lord and Savior only by His grace. Yes, I have chosen Him, but He worked in me and through me, drew me to Himself, and enabled me to will to come to Him. He loosed my will from its bondage to sin, renewed my will, and gave me grace and mercy that I might come to Him. When I came, I came willingly, but only because of His grace. Therefore, when I say that I love the Lord, I am expressing a holy determination in my life to bring the entirety of my life into conformity to His Word: to obey Him, submit to Him, honor Him, worship Him, and praise Him.

David said, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." That is a holy determination. That is the positive. The negative is this: when David says, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength," and when you and I say the same, we are saying that we reject any and everything contrary to Him. I must hate, despise, and reject all sin, no matter how appealing it may be to my flesh. I must love His Word and His will above any and all of my fleshly lusts and fleshly desires. A holy determination to love the Lord enables one to overcome sin, Satan, and the world.

Remember what is said in 1 John 2:15–17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. So if I positively say, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength," I must also say negatively that I will not love, but will hate, any and everything contrary to Him, His Word, and His will.

Let me give you an illustration. It is not a perfect illustration, nor a good illustration, but here it is. Nearly fifty years ago, I chose my wife, and when I chose her, I rejected all others. By God's grace, we choose Him through faith, which He has given us in His race, which is called us when we say, "Yes, I am Thine, O Lord." At

the same time, we are rejecting all false gods, sin, wickedness, Satan, and the world.

So here is the truth: We must will and choose to love the Lord—not only daily, but sometimes hourly, and sometimes minute by minute in strong and severe testing and temptation. There are thoughts that come into your mind, and you have to purposefully and deliberately deal with those thoughts. You have to say, "I refuse them. I will not have them in my mind. I choose the Word of God. I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." We must constantly and completely fight on a daily and hourly basis. What did the Apostle Paul say? "I die daily."

Loving the Lord, and choosing to love the Lord, is a lifestyle. As I fight to maintain my integrity and character with my wife in the face of a world of adultery and fornication, even so I must fight to maintain a holy determination to love the Lord in the face of a world of sin, disobedience, and wickedness. If you do not have a holy determination, you are not going to succeed. David said, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." I will. I am determined.

Look in your Bibles to Psalm 73, and notice verse 25: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Has there ever been a real, holy burning in your life to genuinely love the Lord and to please Him, and to be with Him? Not in heaven as such—we will be there eventually—but on a daily basis: to be in the presence of the Lord and to walk and talk with Him.

I recently preached a series of messages on holiness. An interesting thing is that the Word of God says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." But what is this? The whole context of that verse.

It is really found in Second Corinthians, chapter six. There we have the promise that the Father will be our Father, and we should be His sons. Have you ever stopped to think that here is a father-son relationship? He is giving us this picture. I immediately thought of my father. He is now with the Lord, but I remember many times when I went to my father and he provided for me and

protected me. He did everything for me. All he required of me was that I honor and obey him.

Do you realize that it is the same truth with our heavenly Father? There is a father-son relationship, and we ought to honor and obey Him in that relationship. So there has to be an absolute holy determination, or else we are never going to get anywhere. David said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there's none upon earth that I desire."

Second Prerequisite: A Holy Delineation

There is not only a holy determination; there is also a holy delineation. David said in verse 1 of Psalm 116, "I love the Lord because," and you could stop right there and preach all night long. He said, "I love the Lord because he had heard my voice and my supplication." In Psalm 116, like Psalm 18, David delineates a number of reasons why he should love the Lord.

In Psalm 18, David tells us why he says, "I will love the Lord my strength." God had just given David a great victory over King Saul and all his enemies. So he says, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I trust, my buckler and the horn of my salvation and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

The Lord is my rock, my hiding place, my fortress, my place of defense, my deliverer, my God, my strength, my trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation. In other words, David is saying, "Lord, You have delivered me from my mortal enemies." Do you realize that God has basically done the same thing for us?

Do you realize that God has delivered us so many times, and we are absolutely, totally oblivious of His deliverance? God constantly and consistently overthrows the schemes of the wicked. He foils their plans. He causes them to fall into the pit which they have digged for the righteous. He delivers us from sin and Satan and the world, and we need to acknowledge that deliverance.

That is why the Bible says in Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is saved."

But things get a whole lot rougher and worse for the people of God in the not too distant future. We may need Psalm 18 more than we ever imagined.

If you look in Psalm 116, David begins to delineate a list of why he loves the Lord. He says, "I love the Lord because." What David is doing in Psalm 18 and Psalm 116 is listing reasons why he loves the Lord and rehearsing them. Do you realize that we need to do the same thing? We need to rehearse these things daily, sometimes hourly.

Although there are a number of reasons why we should love the Lord, we must understand that the main reason for loving our Heavenly Father is the excellency of His nature, the majesty of His person, the greatness of His throne, the purity of His attributes, the holiness of His character, and the magnanimous mercy He has demonstrated in providing for us His only begotten Son. In other words, the real reason to love the Lord is simply because He is God. He is infinitely holy and infinitely righteous. We must learn to focus first and foremost upon His person, and only secondly upon His provisions.

Reasons to Love God

In Luke 11:2–4, our Lord taught us to pray: "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who are indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Our Lord taught us first and foremost to focus upon God and His person, His will, and His kingdom, and only secondly upon our needs and our provisions.

There is certainly nothing wrong with being thankful and delineating all the blessings and gracious provisions that God has bestowed upon us. You remember the passage in Luke 17, when ten lepers came and said, "Help, Lord." He asked what they wanted, and they answered that they wanted to be cleansed. He told them to go and show themselves to the priest. As they went, they were cleansed. One turned around, came back, knelt before

our Lord, and thanked Him. Our Lord asked, “Where are the nine? Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?”

Do you realize that one of our problems is that God blesses us so much and so often that we refuse to thank Him and praise Him? But our focus must first of all be upon the giver more than the gifts. It is the giver who makes the gifts beneficial. Can God give the gift of rain? The answer is yes. He can send rain that will be extremely beneficial, but He can also send rain that will be extremely destructive. It is the giver who makes all His gifts beneficial.

The increase of our love and filial obedience should be in proportion to our increased sense of thankfulness and obligation to Him. We love Him not only for His person, but for what He gives us and what He has bestowed upon us. We understand that He has bestowed these gifts because God is love. Therefore, love should beget love. There are practical reasons to love the Lord.

Look at what David said in Psalm 116:1–2: “I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.” David vows to continue in prayer because the Lord heard him. He experienced the blessing of answered prayer and believed that God was to be loved because of His goodness in hearing and answering prayer. Has God ever answered your prayer? Have you ever cried to God in an extreme emergency, and God heard you and answered you? This is exactly what David is saying: “I will love the Lord.” Why? Because He has heard my voice and my supplication; He inclined His ear to me. He listened to me and heard me. Therefore, I am going to call upon Him as long as I live. I will never forget what God has done for me.

God's Providential Deliverance

Secondly, God is to be loved because of His providential deliverance. Look in verses three through six: “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple. I was brought low, and he helped me.”

Here is God's providential deliverance. God has delivered us, and it should provoke us to love Him dearly. He has delivered us not only spiritually, but physically as well. Have you ever stopped to think of all the times God has delivered you, even without your knowledge? There are times when we know that God has delivered us, but there are many other times when we do not know it.

Alice and I were coming home from a meeting in Alabama not too long ago. We were on a back road with no other car in sight, doing the speed limit and sailing down the road. Up ahead was a crossroads. Just before we reached it, a car ran the stop sign. I believe he was doing eighty or ninety miles an hour. I had just slowed down. I said, “Do you realize that if we had not stopped just a few minutes up the road, we would probably have been right in the path of that car?” When we reached the crossroad, I looked to the right, and about two hundred yards down the road the man had pulled over and gotten out of the car; evidently, it had scared him too.

I know that God delivered me there. But have you ever stopped to think that God has delivered us many times, and we do not even know about it? Why did you not die last night? Why were you able to awaken this morning? The Bible teaches in Lamentations 3:22–23, “It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. Because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.”

The reason we did not die last night was God's compassions and mercies. He gives them to us fresh every day. He sustains us and preserves us. If God did not sovereignly and graciously provide mercies and compassions for us daily, we would not make it through one day or one night.

He has been faithful in preserving and sustaining our lives. I could give you illustration after illustration of how God has preserved my life, but He has probably done so many times that I do not even know about it. David says, then, here is a reason to praise God.

Thirdly, in verses 7–9, David delineates the bountiful provisions of God as a reason to love Him and walk before Him: “Return unto

thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. Thou hast delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

Has God dealt bountifully with you? Has He fed you, nourished you, and sustained you? Has He supplied your needs and kept you alive? Has He dried your tears and brought you through what you would call impossible situations? Has He kept you from falling into sin and wickedness? Has He given you life and help, family and friends, breath, abilities, gifts, and graces?

If God has given you all these things, why do you not love Him more? Why do you not sit down with a piece of paper and begin to delineate all the things God has done for you? Why do you not live more holily, righteously, and godly before Him? Why do you not walk more obediently? Do you tell Him daily that you love Him, and do you evidence that love by obedience in your life? Why do you not determine to be more holy, more godly, and more obedient? Why do you not say with David, "I will love the Lord, my strength"?

Have you ever thought what an absolutely great goodness it is on God's part to condescend to be loved by poor, sinful creatures as we are? God does not need our love.

Expressing Love to God

He is the all-sufficient One. He is the eternal, almighty, magnificent, sovereign God of heaven and earth. There are no needs in God. God does not need our love; He does not need anything. Yet He wants our love. He commands us to love Him. Have you ever stopped to think what a mind-bending blessing it is that, by His grace and mercy, we are enabled to love the altogether lovely One, the eternal God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ? That God would humble Himself and condescend to be loved by us! How honored we should be, and at the same time, how humbled we should be, that our great God and Father has granted us grace to love Him.

By nature, we hated Him. If we were left to ourselves, we would still be at enmity with Him. But He did not leave us to ourselves. I think one of the biggest problems that you and I have is that, although we think we love the Lord—and we probably do—we fail to tell Him that we love Him. I tell Alice every day that I love her, sometimes several times a day. I tell the Lord every day that I love Him, sometimes many times. I quote Psalm 18:1 so frequently: "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." I say, "I will to love Thee. I choose to love Thee. I want to love Thee. I do love Thee by Thy grace and by Thy mercy."

Look how applicable this familiar passage is to this message. In John 21, you know the story: Peter had cursed and denied the Lord three times. Beginning in verse 15, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He said unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He said unto him, Feed my sheep." Now watch verse 17: "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep."

Note what Peter did the third time. He appealed to our Lord's omniscience: "Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee." I know our heavenly Father is omniscient, but I want Him to hear my voice every day saying, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength." I do love Thee, O Lord. What a wonderful blessing it is to love the Lord and depend totally and completely upon Him, to have intimate fellowship in the sense that I can tell my heavenly Father I love Him just as I can tell my wife I love her.

Every grandfather will understand this. One of the greatest joys of being a grandpa is when those grandchildren sit on your lap, snuggle up to you, and say, "I love you, Grandpa." It turns your heart. My oldest granddaughter is twenty-four. When she was two years old, I had her in front of me on a horse. Even at two, she could talk up a storm—and she started then and has never stopped.

She is a tiny little thing, but she talks like a machine gun. I had to tell her, “Sweetheart, I cannot hear as fast as you talk, so slow down.” Yet we had been on that horse for I do not know how long without saying a word.

All of a sudden she looked at me and said, “Papa, you’re my very best friend.” I can call her on the phone today, or she’ll call me, and the first question we ask each other is, “Is this my very best friend?” I’ve never forgotten it. I love to hear it from my children. I have three grandsons, two of whom are married. Do you know they will still come sit in my lap, hug my neck, kiss me on the cheek, and tell me they love me? I do not care if they are twenty-four or twenty-two; they still do that.

If it thrills my heart for my children and grandchildren to tell me that they love me, how much more should it thrill the heart of our heavenly Father when, in His grace and mercy, we can look to Him and say, “By that grace and mercy, I have been enabled to love Thee. I love Thee, O Lord, my strength.”

Application and Conclusion

Let me make a couple of applications from Psalm 116. Every believer, without the slightest hesitation, should confess, “I love the Lord.” Immediately afterward, we should say, “I love the Lord because,” and begin to delineate: He is sovereign; He is almighty; He is God; He is infinitely holy and pure. He has turned my heart to Him, quickened my spirit, given me grace, and given me life and health. There should be a multitude of reasons flowing from our hearts as to why we love Him.

A truly grateful heart will be evidenced by acts of worship, praise, and adoration. Psalm 116:12 asks, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all of His benefits toward me?” The answer follows: “I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.” What am I going to do? I am going to praise Him, worship Him, honor Him, and acknowledge that I love Him. Then verse 16 says, “O Lord, truly I am thy servant: I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.”

Now I salute my bonds. I will offer thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows in the Lord now in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of the old Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

If we truly love the Lord, we will have a heart full of praise, worship, and honor for Him. The profession of our love, the acknowledgment of God's mercies and grace, and the recognition of the greatness and consistency of His deliverances should make us walk more holily, pray more fervently, obey more carefully, worship more frequently, be more studious in His Word, and become more grateful and thankful individuals.

Do you love the Lord? Do you love our Heavenly Father? You answer, yes. Have you told Him that you love Him? How frequently do you express your love to Him?

I know that God knows everything, but I am like David. David said three times a day he shall hear my voice. I want Him to hear my voice saying, “I love thee, O Lord, my strength.” In Psalm 50 and verse 23, the Scripture says, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.” Do you want to glorify God? Give Him praise for everything He has done for you, and tell Him that you love Him for who He is, what He has done, and what He is doing.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day and pray that You would indeed give us a holy determination to love Thee. Give us a holy delineation in our lives, that we can list and consider all the reasons why we should love Thee. Make us more obedient, more holy, and more loving to Thee. Give us a practical, obedient love. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 15

Remember Lot And His Wife

December 9, 2015

I do not know if you know the story of the song, “It Is Well With My Soul.” Horatio G. Spafford wrote it. Spafford was a Christian businessman in Chicago, Illinois, and during the great Chicago fire he basically lost everything he had.

His wife was from England, so he sent her and their children back to England. On the way, there was a storm, the boat sank, and his daughters all drowned. His wife was spared and saved. When she reached England, she sent him a telegram: “Saved but alone.” He then took a boat to England to be with his wife. When they passed over the very spot where the vessel went down, the captain told him, “This is where the vessel went down.”

That is when he sat down and penned those words: “When sorrows like sea billows roll, it is well, it is well with my soul. When peace like a river”—it did not matter to him whether it was peace or sorrow—“it is well with my soul.”

The music was written by P. P. Bliss. P. P. Bliss was later in a train wreck. The train not only wrecked, but was on fire, and his wife was killed. He was disabled but alive. He could have escaped; in fact, the rescuers came to get him. He said, “No, go help others. I’m going to stay with my wife.” He died singing, “It is well, it is well with my soul,” the man who put the music to that hymn.

In 2 Peter 2, beginning with verse 6, the Bible says: “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds).” There is a specific command in the Bible to remember Lot’s wife.

Introduction: The Command to Remember Lot's Wife

In Luke 17, verse 32, our Lord simply said, "Remember Lot's wife." When we think of Lot's wife, we ought automatically also to think of Lot because he was her head and was responsible for her. I understand that each individual must die for his own sins. She was the one who sinned and turned and looked back when the messengers of God said, "Do not look back," and she was responsible for her own sin. However, Lot did not sin for her, yet he was her head and was responsible for her education, her environment, and her direction.

She escaped Sodom only by the skin of her teeth. Sodom was in her. She looked back, longing for and loving that which God absolutely hated. The command to remember Lot's wife is peculiar to Luke, and it is an absolutely searching command for everyone whose heart is not steadily fixed upon the Lord. She was not only close to Lot, but almost out of danger; yet she looked back, and it cost her her life. Her disobedience proved the veracity of the word of God, and God made her a monument of His displeasure.

We cannot look back either out of curiosity or covetousness. In Luke chapter 9 and verse 62, our Lord said, "And Jesus said unto

them, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

The Danger of Looking Back

When I was a boy, I ploughed mules, and I also ploughed tractors. Whenever you lay off the first row in a field, whether ploughing a mule or a tractor, you have to look straight ahead. You pick out a tree or a stump and look straight at it; you do not look back whatsoever. If you look back, there will always be a little crook in the row. So we cannot look back on what we used to be and what we used to do.

When we read in 2 Peter 2, verses 6–8, our Lord does not tell us to remember Lot as He told us to remember Lot's wife. Rather, 2 Peter 2 tells us why we should remember Lot. Lot is one believer who really and royally messed up his life. I have often said that if the Bible did not specifically say that Lot was a righteous man, I would have said that he was either a lost man or a hypocrite.

Obviously, he did many things that were wicked and wrong. He may have been a righteous man, yet Scripture tells us that he lived a very tormented life. Why? Have you ever asked what kept Lot in Sodom? Why did he stay? Why did he put up with such wickedness and filth?

The Lord's destruction upon Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain is an example of His justice and wrath. Those cities and their destruction are an example to anyone and everyone, as well as to societies, states, and nations that turn their backs upon God and His Word. In verse 6, the Bible says, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly." God said, "I've given you an example of My wrath. I've given you an example of My judgment against all ungodliness."

When you get to Genesis chapter 19, Lot knew all about the wickedness, perversion, and lawlessness of the Sodomites. In fact, he had to protect the angels in Genesis 19, or at least attempted to protect them, until the Sodomites turned on him and the angels

had to protect him. So you have to ask yourself: Why was he there? Why did he stay, and how could he stay? Do you understand that God often sends warnings to His people? After Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him," the very next verse says this: "By faith Noah,

"Being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." So the Bible says Noah was warned of God, and Noah paid attention to that warning. Lot was warned and did not pay attention. He refused to listen. He refused even to entertain the thought that God may have been warning him. You say, "Well, where in the world did God warn Lot?" Let me show you.

Hold 2 Peter chapter 2, but turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter 14. In fact, you can hold Genesis; we will come back there several times. Look in Genesis chapter 14, beginning with verse 8. I think you can see this is a definite warning. "And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar); and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."

Note, if you would please, they took Lot. Lot is specifically named, and then the Bible says, "and they also took his goods." Everything that he had, they took. Now you know the story: one man escaped and went and told Abram about Lot's capture.

Abram then armed the 318 trained servants, or slaves, that he had in his own house. He also had some confederates, Aner and Eshcol, and they went and rescued Lot and all the other people and

brought them back. Have you ever stopped to think how great a person Abram really was, if that man had 318 trained fighting men in his own house? They probably had wives and children, and probably there were other servants as well. So probably Abram's household was somewhere between a thousand and two thousand people. He was extremely wealthy and had a lot. Lot and all of his goods were captured, and Abram came and rescued him.

Let me ask you a question. Just stop and think about this. If there was a war and you were captured, losing everything that you had, and then somehow, miraculously, you were saved—would you not tend to think, "You know, I might have been in the wrong place. I might consider moving. I might consider leaving this area"? Here was a definite warning to Lot.

Those thoughts may have entered into his mind, but he certainly never did anything about it. It is true that God delivered Lot from Sodom. Yet how did he live while he was in Sodom? It was certainly not easy in one sense of the word. Moreover, it did not strengthen him in his faith, encourage him in righteousness, or create a family bond of resistance to the wickedness that surrounded them.

Lot's Tormented Life in Sodom

The truth of the matter is, it literally destroyed him. I want you to look at 2 Peter chapter 2, because there are some very interesting words used here in reference to Lot. In verse 7, the Bible says, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." Lot is identified as a just man, and he is vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.

Consider the word "vexed." It indicates oppression and vexation. It literally means to tire down, to exhaust, to afflict, to oppress, to wear out, to make trouble for, and to treat roughly. Do you remember in Genesis chapter 27 and verse 46 what Rebekah said to her husband Isaac about Jacob? "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?"

Notice what she said: “I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth.” They had worn her out and tired her down. She was oppressed and vexed. She did not want any more daughters-in-law like these. If Jacob married a woman like this, what good was her life going to do her? One of the words used there is “vexed.” The Bible is talking about Lot being vexed; that is, he was consistently and constantly being beaten down, worn out, and oppressed mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

I can assure you that none of this is conducive even to physical health. The Bible says that Lot was vexed. Notice secondly what the Bible says in verse 7: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." The word "filthy" literally refers to unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, and insolence. Here is what God is telling us: the Sodomites were not only perverted; they were arrogant and insolent. They were absolutely, totally unabashed and unashamed of their wickedness.

Hold 2 Peter chapter 2 in mind, and consider Isaiah chapter 3, where there is a condemnation not only of the Sodomites, but also of the Israelites who followed in that shamelessness. God says, "For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water." We are talking about Judah and Jerusalem. Then verse 8 says, "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory." Then verse 9 speaks of Judah and Jerusalem.

"The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not." In other words, they were absolutely ecstatic over their sin. They were unashamed. It did not bother them. Not only the Sodomites, but the Israelites as well. The open shamelessness and declaration of their perversion showed that the only thing they were concerned with was their own gratification.

They simply lived for themselves. That is exactly the way it is today with most people. They could care less what is right, and

they do not care who reproaches or rebukes them. They simply seek their own gratification.

Now, if you look back in 2 Peter, chapter 2 and verse 7, the Bible says, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." The word "conversation" there simply means a manner of life: their conduct, deportment, and behavior. In other words, this is how they lived—wickedly perverted—and it is what they lived for. The word "wicked" literally means one who breaks through the restraints of law and gratifies his own lust.

If you look at verse 7, what does this mean? Lot was vexed with the wicked. He was surrounded by the wicked, whose lives were thoroughly filled with unbridled, lustful wickedness, and whose attitude was the epitome of arrogance, haughtiness, and insolence. This is how they lived every day. They did not change, did not want to change, and did not desire to change. They flaunted their wickedness in Lot's face. Such had to be a constant oppression upon him.

Now look at verse 8, because God goes further: "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." He was a righteous man dwelling among the wicked. He dwelt among them, in their circle and sphere of influence. The result was that, in seeing and hearing, he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. The word "seeing" includes looking and glancing. You do not necessarily have to look at something purposely and deliberately; you can inadvertently see something.

Everyone in this room has seen things in the past that they wish they had never seen. It may not have been something you purposely did; you glanced, it was inadvertent, but you saw it, and it has bothered you. Here Lot was seeing and hearing. He saw what was going on, he knew what was happening, and yet he stayed.

The Bible says that he heard. He did not necessarily eavesdrop, but he could not escape the sights or the sounds. In hearing and seeing, the Bible says that he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. The word “vexed” in verse 8 is different from the word “vexed” in verse 7. Lot did not participate

in their activities, yet he vexed his righteous soul. He simply saw and heard, and the word "vexed" here literally means to question by applying torture—to be harassed, distressed, or vexed with grievous pains of body and mind.

It was making him sick—literally, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. As we say in South Georgia, his life was a living hell. Every day, nothing changed. There was no peace, respite, ease, or neutrality. The only thing he experienced was constant and continual torment. So why would any believer stay in such a putrid hell and filthy surrounding? Who would even want to be there or desire to be there?

If the Lord sent me to Las Vegas, Nevada, I would go if I knew He sent me. But if He did not send me, I would not go there. I do not even want to be in Atlanta, Georgia; I do not want to be anywhere near a place filled with filthiness and wickedness. Adam Clarke, in his commentary, says that Lot lived in Sodom a minimum of twenty years. In fact, it was probably even more than twenty years. What would make anyone in his right mind, especially a righteous man, want to stay in a place like that?

I want to give you two answers from Scripture. What kept Lot in Sodom was exactly the same things that keep most Christians today in the same thinking environment. First of all, why did he stay? Financial considerations.

Why Lot Stayed: Financial Considerations

I could ask our brother this: How many times do you know of people who left a good gospel-preaching church—a good church that taught Bible doctrine and Bible truth—and moved away simply to get a better income, where there was no gospel-preaching church? Their family just deteriorated.

You know what the Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:10: "For the love of money is the root of all evil." Not money itself, but the love of money is the root of all evil, "which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Obviously, Lot was still a righteous man. He did not necessarily err from the faith in that sense of the word, but I

can assure you he pierced himself through with a multitude of sorrows.

I want you to go back in your Bibles, hold 2 Peter, but go to Genesis 13. Let me show you what I am going to talk about: financial considerations. This is absolutely astounding. In fact, it boggles our minds. You will see the greatness of Abram and the greatness of Lot as well, financially, anyhow. Genesis 13:1 says: "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land."

And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

Verses 5 and 6 are pivotal: "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance

was great, so that they could not dwell together." The herdmen of Lot and the herdmen of Abram were arguing and fighting, probably over the best water and grazing. It was not necessarily Abram and Lot, but their cattlemen, their herdmen.

Abram said, "We ought not to be fussing like this. Let us separate. There is too much; each of us has too much. The land is not able to bear us. If you go to the right, I will go to the left; if you go to the left, I will go to the right." Notice the graciousness and kindness of Abram: "I am willing to give you first choice. You may go wherever you want to go."

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan."

Why did Lot choose the plain of Jordan? The answer is that it was good for raising cattle. You could raise cattle there: plenty of water and plenty of grass. The Bible says he pitched his tent toward Sodom. I want you to understand something, and I will point this out before I leave: what is good for raising cattle is not necessarily good for raising children. What is good for making money is not necessarily good for the family.

Lot had a financial consideration. He was so wealthy and so great that either his tents pointed toward Sodom or at least reached to Sodom. Lot may not have entertained or realized at first how wicked the Sodomites were. He may have known that they were sinners. But the Bible says they were sinners exceedingly before the Lord.

Understand this: all men are sinners, but there are some who are worse sinners than others. There are sinners of the first magnitude, sinners who are so far in rebellion that they flaunt their rebellion in the face of God. That was the way these Sodomites were. It is impossible to avoid sinners, and yet there are certain sinners whom God tells us to avoid.

The Apostle Paul said, "Beware of Alexander the coppersmith, he did me much evil." Another time he said, "Watch out for

Philetus and Hymenaeus." The Apostle Paul tells us that if we are going to avoid sinners, there are some specifically whom we must avoid. In 1 Corinthians 5:9 he writes, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world." If you try to avoid sinners totally, you have to leave the world. You cannot avoid sinners; it is impossible. I know so many Christians who say, "We're going to boycott this company because they support abortion or they support sodomy," and I am not necessarily against boycotting; I am not against that at all.

You may do business with another company that you have not even checked into, and in all probability they support the same thing. So it is almost impossible simply to avoid sinners. But look at what the apostle said: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."

What is he saying? If a man says he is a Christian and lives like that, God says you had better avoid him like the plague. Do not even go around him. He calls himself a Christian, and he is a fornicator, a thief, a drunkard, or an adulterer.

You cannot escape sinners, but there are some whom God forbids us to be around. The question you must ask is this: How much can someone endure just for profit? How much can someone endure just to make money? You must also ask why we place material things above peace, health, life, and happiness. When our Lord said in Matthew 6:25, He asked, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

You don't have to have a five hundred dollar suit. You don't have to have a hundred dollar pair of tennis shoes. And then He goes on to say this in Luke, "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?"

One of my favorite stories is about the extremely wealthy man who died. The pallbearers were carrying the casket to the grave, and one of the pallbearers leaned over and asked another pallbearer who was a Christian, "How much did he leave?" The Christian responded, "He left it all." And he did.

Now, consider that the only thing that Lot is known for in the Bible, I mean, really known for, is his residence in Sodom and his incest with his two daughters, which produced a people that were alien toward and antagonistic toward the people of God. That's the only thing he's known for.

Why Lot Stayed: Family Connections

So you'd have to ask yourself this question: Was it worth it? Why did he stay in Sodom? I'm going to answer, first of all, out of financial considerations. The second reason he stayed in Sodom is because of family connections. What? Family connections.

Have you ever considered, as you read your Bible, that there is absolutely nothing said about Lot's wife or Lot's family until you get to Genesis chapter 19? Is it possible—and I'm going to ask this again—is it possible that Lot married a woman of Sodom? As you read through the book of Genesis, you find him mentioned in connection with Abram, but you never find anything about a wife or a family until you get to Genesis 19. So in Genesis chapter 12, beginning in verse 4: "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him:"

“And Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” Notice that nothing is said here about Lot’s wife or Lot’s family. Abram took his wife and all the souls they had gotten in Haran, but nothing is said about a wife.

In Genesis chapter 13, beginning with verse 5, we read, “And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell

together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together." Notice that it is just Lot at this particular time.

In Genesis chapter 14, verse 12, we read, "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." When Abram rescued Lot, verse 16 says, "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." Lot is the one who was brought back. There is no mention of Lot's wife until Genesis chapter 19.

Is it possible that Lot married a woman of Sodom? I believe the answer is yes. Notice verses 1 and 2: "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night."

The Bible tells us in verse 1, "And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." When you read through the Bible, it is always civil rulers and judges who sit in the gate. Sitting in the gate is a position of authority and power. So here is my question: Is it possible that Lot happened to be a civil ruler in Sodom? It is possible. Whether he was a civil ruler or not, he at least exerted a great deal of influence and power because of his extreme wealth. He was either a civil ruler or he was there because he was exceedingly rich.

Now, in Genesis chapter 13, the Bible said that he pitched his tent toward Sodom. But in Genesis 19:2 we read, "And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house." Not a tent, but a house. The Hebrew word indicates a dwelling place, a habitation. Lot is no longer living in a tent; he is now in a house in Sodom.

One commentator said concerning Lot's wife: "It is probable he was a single man when he parted from Abram and therefore that he married a woman of Sodom. He has, in that case, fallen into the snare of matching, or at all events, mingling with the ungodly. This was the damning sin of the antediluvians. Their country was as the

garden of the Lord, but the beauty of the landscape and the superabundance of the luxuries it afforded did not abate the sinful disposition of the inhabitants. The moral corruption only broke forth into greater vileness of lust and more daring defiance of heaven. They sinned exceedingly before the Lord. Had fallen into the very vortex and vice of blasphemy." Thus, he says very pointedly that Lot married a woman of Sodom.

Adam Clarke said that Lot was in Sodom for twenty years, but it may have been more than that. Genesis 19:12-17 says: "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

Some commentators say that Lot only had two daughters. They say these daughters were betrothed and therefore considered married, although they had not come together as husband and wife. Betrothal in the Bible was like our engagement, but far more serious, because the parties were considered married, as with Joseph and Mary. Thus, some conclude that Lot had only these two daughters.

I do not think that is true. I think there were far more than two daughters, and I will tell you why. When Abram interceded for Sodom and Gomorrah, he asked the Lord, "Lord, if there's 50

righteous there, will you destroy the righteous with the wicked?" The Lord said He would spare it if there were fifty righteous. Abram then reduced the number to forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, and finally ten. Have you ever wondered why Abram stopped at ten?

I mean, he was on a roll. He could have gotten him down to three or four, I think, but he stopped at ten. I believe the answer is because Abram knew that Lot had a wife and eight others, which would have made ten.

Look, if you would, please, in Genesis chapter 19, verse 14: "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters." So there were some already married, I would think. Watch carefully: "and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law." "Sons in law" is plural and "daughters" is plural.

Lot and his wife and two daughters there make four. If he had three other daughters and three sons in law, that is six; six and four is ten. Verse 15 says, "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters." Then comes the phrase, "Take thy two daughters, which are here." In other words, he had some who were not there. But the angel said, "We don't have time to wait on those. You tried to warn them, they would not come. You take the two that are here."

According to the Bible, Lot escaped Sodom and Gomorrah, and his two daughters escaped as well. Outside of Lot and his two daughters, if Lot lived in Sodom for financial considerations and family connections, how much did he lose when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? Everything. He lost it all—absolutely everything.

The Cost of Lot's Choices

In 2 Peter 2:7, the Bible says, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." The Bible does not mention his daughters being delivered except in Genesis 19. Isn't that

amazing? If Lot's wife was a woman from Sodom, that would certainly explain why she looked back: family, fortune, and friends. Everything she had ever known was in Sodom. She looked back, and God judged her. The Bible says, "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."

When God tells us to remember Lot, we understand why we should remember him. First of all, we must actually count the cost of following Jesus Christ.

Applications for Believers

If we live obedient lives, in all probability, we are going to suffer. What did the Apostle Paul say? "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." There is no two ways about that. If you live godly, obediently, and the way you should live, undoubtedly, sooner or later, you are going to be persecuted, usually by the powers that be, or by other wicked people.

But you have to understand this: the cost of not following Christ is immeasurably greater and disappointing. If we forsake Him, we lose everything. Our Lord said in Mark 8:35, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Yes, we will suffer if we live obediently for Christ, but those who do not live obediently are going to suffer far, far more. It is bad to lose a family member to the world or to the devil, but it is even worse to lose them all. Here is a second application: we need to have our minds made up in advance as to whom we are going to obey and whom we are going to follow.

Remember Jonah. God sent him to Nineveh, and he preached, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." God gave them forty days. The angels grabbed Lot by the hand and said, "Get your wife and two daughters and get out of here." They did not have forty days; they had only a few minutes. Sometimes, in the providence of God, we do not have days or hours to make up our minds. It is seconds.

We will either serve Christ and be obedient, or we will not. Years ago I preached a message entitled, “What Do You Want Said at

Your Funeral?" When I die, I do not want people wondering whether or not I was a Christian, whether or not I believed the Bible, or whether or not I loved the Lord Jesus Christ. I want them to know in advance.

You remember what Joshua told those people in Joshua chapter 24? He said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." You had better make up your mind in advance. You had better say yes, because you may have only seconds to make a decision.

Here is my next application: It does matter what you see and what you hear. Lot, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul. I do not care if you are on the Internet, in the supermarket, or looking in a newspaper; usually, you see things you should never see. Television is the same way. I have known preachers and Christians who said, "Well, I'll never, ever go down to that movie theater and see those things. I'm not going to support Hollywood. I'm not going to do that." Yet they will watch the same ungodly movie on television in their own home. If it is too ungodly to watch downtown, it is too ungodly to watch in your own home.

David said, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes." That should be our standard. Years ago I made up my mind not to watch anything I know is wicked, wrong, or ungodly. I am just not going to do it.

It does matter what you see and what you hear. How about this one? It does matter where you live. It mattered for Lot. I want to be where the Lord wants me, that is for sure. But the Lord knows my life and my heart, and if it is not His will, I do not want to be in a concrete city or in a jungle. In the cities, the jungle for me, I would rather be out watching His creation and by myself. It does matter where you live, and, young people, I hope you understand this: It does matter whom you marry.

You have no business as a Christian marrying an unbeliever, nor do you have any business rushing into marriage when you are unsure whether the individual is a Christian. I have known many

young ladies who married men who said they were Christians, only to discover afterward, “Oh, no, they’re going back to what they’ve always been.” They said it only to get married to that young lady.

It does matter whom you marry. Understand this, mom and dad: children are not cattle. What happens to be good for raising cattle is not necessarily good for raising children. Children have to be educated.

Do not leave a testimony like Lot’s. What kind of testimony did he have? He had nothing—living in Sodom, committing incest with his two daughters. What kind of a testimony is that?

Sometimes, as I read through the Psalms, I come to that psalm where David says, “Remember not the sins of my youth.” And I have to say as I pray, “Lord, remember not the sins of my youth, the sins of my middle age, and the sins of my old age.” The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 5:22, “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” Lot certainly did not do that. We must abstain from all appearance of evil.

Think about the absolute need and necessity for a godly family, a godly fellowship, and godly friends. Lot had no one to encourage him. He did not even have a godly family. There were no godly friends in Sodom and no godly fellowship. If God has given you a fellowship where the Word of God is preached and taught, you had better thank God for it. If God has given you a godly family or godly friends, you had better thank God. Every time you remember Lot and his wife, thank God that He spared you and that you do not live in Sodom. Remember Lot and his wife.

CHAPTER 16

Righteous Rebellion, No Such Thing!

July 1, 2018

Introduction: A Provocative Quote

Proverbs 17, verse 11, says, “An evil man seeketh only rebellion. Therefore, a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.” While I will not be expounding this verse particularly, I am going to be expounding the principle.

I was recently sent a quote from a friend. He had heard the statement, printed it, sent it to me, and asked me about it. The quote dealt not only with marriage, but also with interracial marriage. The individual making the statement was strongly in favor of marrying outside one's race. The quote was this: “If your parents or grandparents disagree and say no to an interracial marriage, it is a righteous rebellion to go against them due to them being against God.” I do not believe that I know the person who made this statement. If I have met the individual, I do not remember it.

This message is not necessarily an attack upon the person who made the statement. I do believe the statement was made in arrogance and ignorance. I am not going to deal with the arrogant assumption that anyone who opposes interracial marriage is against God. Obviously, that claim is contrary to truth, Christian charity, and the right of conscience.

There is, however, a very clear theological error in the statement, and I could not allow it to go unanswered. According to this quote, if those who oppose interracial marriage are against God, then the way to rectify that sin is to begin another sin—that of rebellion. Calling it righteous rebellion does not change its nature. It is still rebellion.

Let me say at the outset that this message has absolutely nothing to do with interracial marriage. Whether you advocate it or are totally against it is beside the point. I am not interested in that issue at this particular time; it is not the focus of this message. However, there is a part of this message that I believe is very important. Anyone, even a novice reader of Scripture, understands—or at least should understand—a very important principle, and that is this.

Thesis: No Such Thing as Righteous Rebellion

There is no such thing as righteous rebellion. Rebellion is sin, wickedness, evil, and a transgression of God's law. Moreover, according to the Word of God, it merits the death penalty.

Rebellion is sin because it resists and is against God's ordained authority. Rebellion cannot exist apart from authority, and authority cannot exist apart from God. God established authority, gave authority, and prescribed authority. He created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, or civil government, which is a ministry of justice.

God's Ordained Authority and Its Limits

When God created these institutions and gave authority to the institutions and the individuals in them, He always limited that

authority. The only one who has absolute, total, and complete authority is God Himself. A father should not go beyond the authority God gave him as a father. A pastor should not go beyond the authority God gave him in the church. Neither should a civil servant or politician go beyond the authority God prescribed for civil government. When one goes beyond the authority God ordained, it is theft, usurpation, tyranny, and despotism. It does not matter whether it occurs in the home, the church, or civil government.

Authority can be exercised only in its proper sphere. God has ordained what we would call sphere authority. When you leave your sphere of authority, you do not carry your authority with you; you lose it. I may be the head of my home and my house, but I am not the head of Steve's house or David's house. I have no right to go to Steve's house and order Lorraine around. She is not my wife, and I have no authority over her in that sense. Alice is my wife, so I have authority over her, and I had authority over my children when they were home. Once I leave my sphere of authority, I do not carry that authority with me. It is the same way with being a pastor. Just because I am a pastor in my church and can advise, counsel, exhort, rebuke, or tell people, as the old timers say, how the cow ate the cabbage, does not give me authority beyond that sphere.

I cannot go into another man's church or ministry and run it, telling him what to do and what not to do. That is not my sphere of authority. Likewise, the civil government has no right to come into the church or the home and tell them what to do unless, of course, there are mala in se laws being broken. Mala in se is Latin for that which is evil in and of itself.

If murder, theft, incest, or something similar is taking place, the civil government has the opportunity and the right to come into the church or the home to correct it, because it is indeed the minister of justice. But every individual to whom God gave authority, and every institution that He ordained and gave authority to, He ordained to be His servant.

Rebellion vs. Resistance

God never ordained any individual or institution to violate His law or His will. He ordained them to be His servants and to fulfill His will. When one goes over, above, and beyond the authority God gave, he may be resisted, because it is not godly authority or the authority God ordained. When you have lawful authority and act against it, that is rebellion. When you have usurped authority and act against it, that is resistance. Rebellion can only be against lawful authority; resistance can only be against unlawful authority. When authority is lawful, it must be obeyed. When authority is unlawful, it must be resisted.

The Scripture teaches us that rebellion merits the death penalty. In 1 Samuel 15, God sent King Saul on a mission, and Saul disobeyed God. When Samuel met Saul, Saul said, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, I have performed all the word of the Lord." About that time, something went moo. Samuel said, "If you have obeyed God, what means the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen in my ear? If you had obeyed God, everything would be dead." Saul answered, "The people spared them that they might sacrifice to God." Then Samuel told Saul, "For rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as a sin of iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected thee for being king." When Samuel said rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft, witchcraft merited the death penalty.

God says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Idolatry merited a death penalty. And I want to point out that Saul was in rebellion because he disobeyed lawful authority. That is simply the Word of God. That is why Proverbs 17:11 says, "An evil man seeketh only rebellion." In other words, he is not going to seek that which is lawful. An evil man seeketh only rebellion. Therefore, "a cruel messenger shall be sent against him."

Biblical Basis for Parental Authority

Now, anyone who has read the Bible, and especially the Old Testament, cannot help but realize that the Father is always ordained as the head of the house. In fact, everything in the Old Testament was patriarchal in nature. That did not mean that the

wife was a second-class citizen, that she had no input, or that she was not considered. It meant that God ordained the man to be the head of the house and the head of the family. And, of course, that is exactly the way it was.

Now, you are going to ask, is the same true in the New Testament? The answer is yes. I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 11. Look, if you would please, at verse 3. Here is something the Apostle Paul wanted everyone to know, and he spells it out very plainly. He says, "But I would have you know," you must know this, "that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God."

Here is God's ordained order of authority: God, Christ, man, woman. He said, "I would have you know this, that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." So it is God, Christ, man, woman. I want you to skip down to verse 7. The Apostle says, "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man." Man is the glory of God, and the woman is the glory of man. "For the man is not of the woman" originally, initially, "but the woman of the man," because Eve was taken out of Adam's side. "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman was created for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord."

"For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God." Now, here is what he is saying, first of all. The woman is placed under man by virtue of the creation ordinance. Adam was created first, and the woman was created second. Adam was not created for Eve. Eve was created for Adam.

Here is the honor or the glory of the man: "I was not made for the woman; the woman was made for me." Here is the humility of a man: "Although I was made first and I was not made for the woman, I'm incomplete without the woman." Here is the humility of a woman: "The man was not made for me; I was made for the man, and I was made second." Here is the honor of the woman: "I'm the only one who can complete the man." So, just like Eve was

initially of Adam, now man is of the woman. And so that is what he is saying.

Both now are in the Lord and of the Lord, and man needs the woman just like the woman needs the man. Now, let me show you this. We are talking about the creation ordinance. As you go to 1 Timothy chapter 2, I want to quote 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15. There the apostle is giving you the theme of the book of 1 Timothy: “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth.” So, 1 Timothy is about how to behave yourself in the house of God. He gives directions for men, and he gives directions for women.

In 1 Timothy 2, verse 12, he says this very plainly, and he tells you why he says it: “...but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Why then is a woman not to teach in church? Why is a woman not to usurp authority over the man? Why is a woman to be in silence in the church? Watch.

"For Adam was first formed, then Eve." This is the creation ordinance. Paul then says, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." Thus, the first reason he gives that a woman should not teach or usurp authority over the man is the creation ordinance. The second is that Eve was deceived and was first in the transgression. It was not Adam. Adam was not deceived; the woman was deceived. She did not know what she was doing. Adam did.

We are still talking about this creation ordinance and the fact that the woman was the first in the transgression. The apostle now tells us why women should not teach or preach.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 34, the apostle says: “Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak. But they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask

their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Albert Barnes wrote in his commentary: "The rule is positive, explicit, and universal. There is no ambiguity in the expressions, and there can be no differences of opinion one would suppose in regard to their meaning. The sense evidently is that in all those things which he has specified, the women were to keep silence. They were to take no part. No rule in the New Testament is more positive than this, and however plausible may be the reasons which may be urged for disregarding it, and for suffering women to take part in conducting public worship, yet the authority of the Apostle Paul is positive and the meaning cannot be mistaken."

Again, verse 34 says: "...let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law."

John Gill, the great Baptist expositor, said: "...by this the apostle would signify that the reason why women are not to speak in the church, or to preach, or to teach publicly, or to be concerned in the ministerial function, is because this is an act of power and authority, of rule and government, and so contrary to that subjection which God in His law requires women unto men."

John Calvin said it like this: "Paul's reasoning, however, is simple. That authority to teach is not suitable to the station that a woman occupies. Because if she teaches, she presides over all the men while it becomes her to be under subjection."

"Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak. But they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Where in the Bible are women commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law? You can find that in Genesis 3 and verse 16. After Eve had transgressed, after God had cursed the ground for man's sake and the serpent, He said to Eve, "...and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Not only in the creation ordinance, but now, because of sin, the woman is placed under the man. One of the major problems we have today in our churches is that women run the churches. You

may ask, how can women run the churches if there are what are known as men's meetings? The answer is that the women run the men. The women may be silent; they may not say anything. But many of them will tell their husbands what to think, how to think, how to vote, what to do, and what not to do.

What we have today in our generation is a whole generation of spineless, gutless men who refuse to be the head of their homes and rule their homes according to the Word of God. The husband turns out to be an extension of the wife, instead of the wife being an extension and a helpmate for the husband. Many times, in most churches, women do not need to speak because they have already told their husbands what to do and what not to do. In actuality, they are in control.

I understand, and I hope you understand, that the message I am preaching today is not politically correct. In all probability, I am going to be called bigoted, chauvinistic, hateful, unloving, unkind, and out of touch with reality. I may be. But I do know what the Scriptures teach, and I do know what the Bible says. Please understand this: the Bible is to be our sole rule for faith and practice.

We are not to be ruled by political correctness, peer pressure, or mob mentality. We are to be ruled by the clear, plain Word of God. When you stop and think about what is happening in society, in our culture, and in our churches, here it is: there is a breakdown in the authority of the family. Because that authority is destroyed, the family is destroyed.

Because there is no "thus saith the Lord," everyone does their own thing and does as they please. On the one hand, there are fathers and husbands who will not exercise their God-given authority in a godly, biblical manner. They refuse to do so. On the other hand, there are some wives and children who, even when they see and hear that authority exercised in a godly manner, rebel. They say, "We're just not going to live like that. We're just not going to do that."

A glimpse of this authority can be seen in Numbers chapter 30, which deals with vows. If a wife makes a vow to God and her

husband hears it, if he says nothing, the vow stands. But if he says to his wife, “No, you’re not going to do that,” the vow is disallowed. God does not hold her responsible to keep it.

The Father's Authority in Marriage

The same thing is said of a daughter. If she makes a vow while in her father’s home, and he hears it and says nothing, the vow stands. But if he says, “No, that’s not going to work,” the vow is disallowed. So, even when it comes to marriage, Scripture teaches that the father has the right to say no. There are biblical reasons why he should say no, and biblical reasons why he should say yes. Scripture is so plain that even when a young woman is seduced, it is still up to the father. Let me show you.

Deuteronomy 22, verse 28, says, “If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed,” a single girl who is not engaged, “and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found, then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife. Because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.”

Here is a general principle in Scripture: if a man seduces a woman, he is to marry her, and he can never divorce her. He can never put her away.

There is only one exception. Exodus 22, verse 16, says, “And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed,” again, she is single, “and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.” Here is the only exception: “If her father utterly refused to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.”

So the father still has the final say, even if the young woman has been seduced. If she has been seduced and there is no marriage, he is to give her the dowry of virgins, which usually was two years' worth of wages.

Matthew Henry, the great commentator, says this on the passage: “A law that he who debauched a young woman should be obliged to marry her. If she was betrothed to another, it was death to debauch her. Deuteronomy 22, verses 23 and 24. But the law here mentioned respects her as single. But if the father refused her

to him, he was to give satisfaction in money for the injury and disgrace he had done to her. This law puts an honor upon marriage and shows likewise how improper a thing it is that children should marry without their parents' consent, even here, where the divine law appointed the marriage, both as a punishment to him that had done wrong and a recompense to her that had suffered wrong, yet there was an express reservation of the Father's power. If He denied His consent, there must be no marriage."

Examples of Rebellion: Esau and Samson

Many individuals in the Bible got themselves into trouble by rebelling against their parents and despising their authority. Esau married contrary to his parents' wishes and will. Genesis 26:34 says, "...and Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite." Thus Esau married two Hittite women. Verse 35 says, "...which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."

Now look at Genesis 27:46. Here is what Rebekah said concerning these Hittite women: "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do to me?" She was at the point of exasperation and desperation, totally frustrated with these two Hittite women.

Now watch chapter 28, verse 1: "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father, and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people. And give the blessing of Abraham to thee, and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham. And Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan-aram, and to Laban, the son of Bethuel, the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob and Esau's mother."

Esau had disobeyed; Jacob had obeyed. To show the rebellion in Esau's life, verse 6 says, "When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence, and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was

gone to Padan-aram. And Esau, seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father, then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, and the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

In other words, Esau's attitude was this: Jacob obeyed; I'm not going to do that. Since they do not like these women, I'm going to marry more of them. That was pure rebellion. What Esau did, he did merely to spite his parents.

Jacob obeyed his father, Isaac, just like Isaac obeyed his father Abraham. Isaac remained single until he was 40, until Abraham sent Eliezer the servant to get Rebekah to be Isaac's wife. Genesis 25:20 says, "And Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel, the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian." Isaac waited 40 years and married, but he did so following Abraham's instruction.

Everyone in this room probably has been to weddings. In fact, one individual said, "Yes, and I've been to one too many," speaking of his own wedding; but he was joking. When the father walks the bride down the aisle and comes up to the groom, the pastor normally asks, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" The father answers, "Her mother and I." Then he takes his daughter's hand and puts it in the groom's hand. This symbolizes that the father is transferring his authority over this young woman to her new husband. The new husband is now to be her protector, her provider, and her head. That's what it represents.

Many people have gotten into trouble by failing to obey their parents. Samson was one of them. In Judges, chapter 14, beginning with verse 1, the Bible says, "And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother,

and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. Now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well."

The Philistines were Canaanites. They were of the group that God had forbidden Israel to intermarry with. Deuteronomy, chapter 7, beginning with verse 1, says, "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land, whither thou goest to possess it, He hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them. Neither shalt thou make marriages with them. Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods. So will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy you suddenly."

Joshua gave the same warning before he died. In Joshua, chapter 23, beginning with verse 11, he said, "Take good heed, therefore, unto yourselves, that you love the Lord your God. Else, if you do anywise, go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you, know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from

Before you, but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. Here are specific commands not to marry these people. Samson went down to Timnath, saw a Philistine woman, and came back and told his father and mother, “I found this woman. Get her for me so I can marry her.” Manoah looked at Samson and said, “Is

there never a woman among the daughters of your own people that you have to go down to the Philistines?"

Basically, he said, "There are plenty of beautiful women in your own tribe. If they do not please you, there are eleven more tribes. Just do not marry a Philistine woman. Marry an Israelite." Samson answered, "Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well." In other words, "I do not see anything wrong with it. It is good in my eyes. It does not matter if it violates God's law, if it violates 'honour thy father and thy mother,' or if I am rebelling against your counsel, advice, and admonition. Get her for me. She pleaseth me well." All the heartache that came from this incident could have been avoided if Samson had listened to his father and mother.

You know the story. He never married the woman. Because of what happened, she was given to a man he had used as his friend. If he had listened, things would have been different, but he did not. There is no such thing as righteous rebellion. Rebellion is sin. It is wicked, evil, and ungodly.

The Command to Honor Parents and Its Consequences

Three times particularly, God has commanded us to honor our father and our mother. The first is in Exodus 20:12: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." In Deuteronomy 5:16, He said again, "Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that thy days may be prolonged, that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Then, in Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that thy days may be long upon the earth."

Rebelling against the lawful authority of parents is not honoring them. Despising their godly counsel and concern is not honoring them. Deuteronomy 27:16 says, "...cursed be he that setteth light by his father and his mother, and all the people shall say, Amen." What does it mean to set light by them? It means saying, "I don't have to listen to them. They're old fuddy-duddies. They don't know

anything. This is a new generation. They don't know what they're talking about."

John Gill explained that setting light by father and mother means that one secretly despises them in his heart and, by looks and gestures, mocks at them in a private manner unseen by others. If he publicly cursed them, that was cognizable by the civil magistrate, and he was to be put to death.

Matthew Henry said that Deuteronomy 27:16 is against the fifth commandment. The contempt of parents is a sin so heinous that it is put next to the contempt of God Himself. If a man abused his parents, either in word or deed, he fell under the sentence of the magistrate and must be put to death. But to set light by them in his heart was a thing which the magistrate could not take cognizance of, and therefore it is here laid under the curse of God. It is laid under the curse of God who knows the heart. Those are cursed children that carry themselves scornfully and insolently toward their parents.

If setting light by your parents brings the curse of God upon you, how much more of a curse is upon you if you rebel against them? Keep in mind that it was God who established parents, father and mother, and the home. Rebellion can only be against lawful authority, and this is a lawful authority.

The Bible says in Leviticus 19, verse 3, "You shall fear every man his mother and every man his father, and keep my sabbaths. I am the Lord your God." Then He said in Leviticus 20, verse 9, "For everyone that curseth his father and his mother shall surely be put to death. He that curseth his father and his mother, his blood shall be upon him."

You can curse your parents without ever using a curse word. There are a multitude of ways to curse your parents. Let me put it very plainly again: There is no such thing as righteous rebellion. Rebellion is only sin and wickedness. It merits a death penalty.

Teaching Rebellion Is Also Wicked

Read Numbers chapter 16, and see what happened to Dathan, Abiram, Korah, and the 250 princes who rebelled against Moses

and Aaron. God killed them. Read what happened to the children of Israel when they appointed a captain so that they could return to Egypt, in Numbers chapter 14 and in Nehemiah chapter 9 and verse 17. God killed them. Why? Because they were in rebellion.

Look in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5. Our Lord is speaking. Begin reading there with verse 17.

"Think not that I'm come to destroy the law or the prophets. I'm not come to destroy, but to fulfill." So when he says, "Think not that I'm come to destroy the law of the prophets," don't even let this thing enter into your mind. Perish the thought. God forbid. That's what he's saying. "Think not that I'm come to destroy the law of the prophets. I'm not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Put into full force. Then he says, "...for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." And then he says this: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Anybody who teaches others to break one of these least commandments shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.

Teaching rebellion is just as wicked as rebellion itself. Jeremiah 28 records Jeremiah the prophet confronting Hananiah, a false prophet who had been denying the Word of God, particularly through Jeremiah. In verse 15, Jeremiah says, "Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord hath not sent thee, but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth. This year thou shalt die. Why? Because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord." So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month. He was teaching rebellion, and God killed him.

Jeremiah 29:32 gives another example: "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed. He shall not have a man to dwell among this people, neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the Lord, because he had taught rebellion against the Lord." Here are

two men whose lives God particularly took because they were teaching people to rebel against lawful, God-ordained authority. There is no such thing as righteous rebellion. Rebellion is sin.

Applications and Conclusion

The first application is this: Solomon gave us wise words in Proverbs 13:1: “A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.” I have said it myself, and I have heard it said, “The older I got, the wiser my father became.”

When you are young, you think you know everything. Your father tells you something, and it goes in one ear and out the other because you have all your plans and ideas, and you do not want anything to interfere with what you want to do. As you mature, however, you understand that there was wisdom in what he said.

Proverbs 15:5 tells us, “A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent.” It is a fool who despises his father's instruction.

Let me tell you where we are today—in our society, our culture, and our churches. We have arrived at the stage where practically all lawful authority is despised, hated, and rebelled against, especially the authority of father and mother.

Young people have basically become a law unto themselves. Like Samson, they say, “Get her for me. I see nothing wrong with it. It is good in my eyes. It is right in my own eyes. I do not care what God says, what my parents say, or what anybody says. I am going to do my own thing.”

Most of you know that I could care less about television. We had not had one in our home for years, and when we did have one, I especially hated talk shows and game shows. Once, while I was in a motel, I was flipping through the channels trying to find a news channel. I do not know why I listen to the news, since I did not believe most of it. I concluded long ago that if you believe the opposite of what the newscaster says, you are probably closer to the truth. I came upon a crazy talk show and was about to change the channel when the host said something that made me stop and listen.

He was interviewing a young teenage girl, eighteen or nineteen, who had become an overnight sensation, a movie star, so to speak. She was living with a married man. The talk show host asked her, "Well, don't you think that's wrong?" I remember her answer just like it was five minutes ago: "It may be wrong for others, but it's all right for me."

Let me translate that: "I'm a law to myself. I do as I please. It's right in my eyes. I don't care what anybody else says. I don't care what God says." The Bible says in Proverbs chapter 30, verse 11, "There is a generation that curseth their father and doth not bless their mother." And we're in that generation.

I've had people ask me, "How can I honor my father since my father was a drunk? Or my father beat me, or my father abused me, or my father did this, or my father did that?" First of all, there are no perfect fathers, husbands, homes, preachers, Christians, or politicians. We all know that. But when you're talking about father and mother, since God commands us to honor them, it behooves father and mother to be honorable people, so that it would be easy for our children to honor us.

That is one reason why he said in Ephesians 6 and verse 4, "You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord." We need to be honorable people. But even if our parents are dishonorable, even if they sin and violate their position, that does not change or alter the command of God. They are still our parents, and we would have to find a way to honor them.

I know of one young woman whose father was a drunkard. He deserted her, her siblings, and her mother; never supported them and never came back. He was gone for years until he was dying of cancer. This woman took that dishonorable father into her home, cared for him, and nursed him until he died. She said, "I'm so thankful. Yes, there was a reconciliation." She added, "I'm so thankful I could fulfill God's command even to someone who was so dishonorable most of their lives." Just because someone is dishonorable does not alleviate us from our responsibility to obey God.

Rebellion is not righteous. It can never be righteous because it is against God and against God's ordained authority. When one sins against God's ordained authority, he sins against God Himself. There can be no rebellion where there is no authority. Without authority, it is resistance; but where there is lawful, God-ordained authority, there must be obedience, or the only alternative is rebellion. When someone admonishes you to go contrary to God's lawful, ordained authority, it is wickedness, sin, and teaching rebellion. Rebellion can only be against lawful authority; resistance can only be against unlawful authority.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You, Father, for Your truth, Your love, Your mercy, Your goodness, and Your kindness. Help us, Father, to understand these principles. Lord, help us to obey them and to be thankful for all that You have done for us and all that You have allowed us to do and to be. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 17

Remember Miriam

August 9, 2020

Introduction: The Command to Remember

Deuteronomy 24:8-9 says: “Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.”

I found it interesting, as I was reading through the book of Deuteronomy, that God said, “Remember that which thy God did unto Miriam.” This passage reminds us of our Lord’s command in Luke 17:32: “Remember Lot’s wife.” Years ago I preached the message “Remember Lot and his wife.” I also preached the message “Lot the loser.”

We are reminded of that which God commanded His people to remember as they came out of Egypt and right before they entered into the promised land. In Deuteronomy 25:17, God said, “Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt.”

There is another very clear passage in Micah 6:5, where God says, “O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the LORD.” Once again He said that you need to remember what Balak consulted and what Balaam answered. He said that you may know the righteousness of the Lord. Years ago, I preached a series, I think, of six messages on learning the righteousness of God from that verse and from the context of what He tells us we must remember.

It would probably be time-consuming, but it would probably be a very interesting study if you would take the time to go through the Bible and simply look at the word “remember” and see everything that God tells us we are to remember. We are indeed a very forgetful people. We become busy with many things, and consequently we forget many things. Oftentimes we forget truth. Oftentimes we forget our covenant. Oftentimes we forget God.

I remember watching the movie “Cromwell” years ago with Richard Harris in it. There was a battle, and Cromwell was riding back and forth on his horse. He prayed, “O Lord, I will be busy about many things this day. If I forget Thee, please do not Thou forget me.”

God does indeed remind us not to be forgetful. In Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 1, He said, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” Oftentimes things slip our minds. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 13 and verse 16, “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Over and over in the Bible, we are told certain things that we are not to forget. But when you look at Deuteronomy 24 and verse 9, God says this: “Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.”

Why Remember Miriam? Old Testament Examples for Us

When you read a passage like that, several thoughts probably enter your mind. The first would be this: Why in the world should I remember what God did unto Miriam? After all, Miriam has been dead for thousands of years. The second thought would be something like this: What in the world has Miriam's life or Miriam's death to do with me? I did not come out of Egypt with her. Why should I remember what the Lord God did unto Miriam?

Let me answer that. Romans 15 and verse 4 says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime"—the Apostle Paul is talking about the Old Testament—"whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Those things in the Old Testament were written for our learning. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, the Apostle Paul takes what happened in the Old Testament, especially during Israel's wilderness wanderings, and makes an application to the Corinthian church. He said, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

Look carefully at verse 6: "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer."

Now look at verse 11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon

whom the ends of the world are come." In verse 6, the Bible tells us that these were our examples; in verse 11, it says they are our ensamples.

The word in the Greek is the same. It is the Greek word "tupos," from which we derive our English word "type." It literally refers to a figure, an example, or a pattern. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, the Apostle Paul is using this in an ethical sense as a dissuasive to the Corinthian Christians. He is saying, "Don't act like the Israelites in the wilderness. If you act as they acted, you are going to receive the judgment of God the way they received it." He is dissuading them from doing the things the Israelites did in the wilderness. He takes all these things that happened to Old Testament Israel and applies them to a New Testament church.

When you look back to Deuteronomy 24 and verse 9, God says, "Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt." He is using Miriam as a dissuasive example: Don't act like Miriam. Don't have Miriam's attitude. Don't let what happened to Miriam happen to you. If you want to understand what happened to Miriam and why it happened, look in your Bibles to Numbers, chapter 12.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 12:1-15 (KJV)

The Incident in Numbers 12

> "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.
>
> "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in

a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

"Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee. And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again. And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again." So Miriam was smitten with leprosy.

Let me set the stage and show what really happened. I want to correct what I think is an erroneous thought in the minds of many people. When you look in Numbers chapter 12 and verse 1, Miriam and Aaron were against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. The Bible says, "for he had married an Ethiopian." So many people think that what Moses did was marry a black woman.

Clarifying the Identity of Moses' Wife

And that is not true. The Hebrew word here is "Cush." She was indeed a Cushite. The word Cushite is sometimes translated as Ethiopian, but the Cushites were descended from Ham, a son of Noah. Cush was therefore a grandson of Noah. The Keil and Delitzsch commentary says: "Cush, the Ethiopians of the ancients who not only dwelt in Africa, but were scattered throughout the

whole of southern Asia and originally, in all probability, settled in Arabia, where the tribes that still remain mingled with the Shemites," that is, from Shem, "and adopted a Shemitic language."

John Gill said it this way: "But though this word Cush, as used in scripture, is generally rendered by us Ethiopia, this must not be understood of Ethiopia in Africa, but in Arabia, and indeed is always to be understood as one part of Arabia, and which was near to the land of Judea." Moses' wife, then, is called an Ethiopian when she was an Arabian and of Midian. Her name was Zipporah, and she was from Midian.

I believe this is why Miriam was mocking and so upset: Zipporah was not of the original twelve tribes. Therefore, she was not a direct descendant from Abraham and Sarah. However, she was a direct descendant from Abraham, because after Sarah died, Abraham remarried. Genesis 25:1-2 says, "Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah."

Midian was a son of Abraham and Keturah. Reuel, or Jethro, the father of Zipporah, was a priest of Midian. Zipporah was a Cushite, in the genealogy of Noah, but she was also a Midianite, because Abraham and Keturah had a son named Midian. The Midianites sprang from Midian and Abraham and Keturah. Jethro, sometimes called Reuel in Scripture, was the father of Zipporah and the father-in-law of Moses, and he was a believer. How do I know that he was a believer?

If you look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus chapter 18, hold that passage because we're going to come right back there momentarily. The Bible says, “And Jethro, Moses' father in law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father in law before God.” So here Jethro is offering sacrifices to the one true and living God. And here Moses and Aaron and all the elders are sitting down communing with him.

So obviously he was indeed a real, genuine believer. John Gill said, “Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, who being a descendant of Abraham, might have retained the knowledge of the

true God, and might be a priest of his, as Melchizedek was, or otherwise it may be thought improbable that Moses would have married his daughter, as he afterwards did." Aben Ezra says he was a priest of God.

Though the word is sometimes used for prince, ruler, or governor, when you look back in Numbers chapter 12, you find Miriam mocking Zipporah, because Zipporah did not have in her genealogy Abraham and Sarah. It was Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She was not a member of the twelve tribes as they were, because Aaron, Miriam, and Moses were Levites. But she was still a descendant of Abraham through Keturah and also a descendant through Noah. Very obviously, she was an Arabian and was not necessarily a black woman.

Some people try to say that Moses married twice. No, nowhere in the Bible will you ever find that there was a second wife for Moses. When Moses and Zipporah were going back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites, the Lord attacked Moses in the way because he had failed to circumcise his sons. Zipporah did so and said, "A bloody husband art thou to me because of the circumcision."

Sometime later, Moses sent her back to her father because of all the hassle he was going through, not only with Pharaoh but also with the Israelites. If you look in your Bible to Exodus chapter 18, you will see that Zipporah was brought back to Moses. Notice Exodus 18 verse 1: "When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt; then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, and her two sons; of"

The name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land: and the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh. And Jethro, Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God. And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her. And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their

welfare; and they came into the tent. Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel, whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

And Jethro said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them. Jethro then offered sacrifice to God, and Moses and Aaron and all the elders ate with him.

Obviously, Zipporah was Moses' one and only wife. When you look at Numbers 12:1, you cannot help but see that Miriam now is the leader in this. She is attacking Moses because she does not like Zipporah.

In Deuteronomy 24:8, God says, "Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do."

Leprosy as Divine Judgment

"Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt."

The Lord commanded Israel to take heed and diligently observe what the law demanded if they were infected with leprosy. They were to follow the directions of the priests, who were to give them the commandments of God in that area. In light of the plague of leprosy, they were to remember what God did unto Miriam by the way. The law of leprosy is given in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14.

It is not repeated here because the law of leprosy was not for the people in general, but for the priests in particular. The priests had to declare whether something was leprous—whether an individual, a house, or a garment—and they had to declare what was to be done for cleansing. Thus, the law is not necessarily repeated here,

but God is saying that you must be careful to follow the determination of the priest.

Leprosy in the Bible was usually a sign of God's judgment upon a scandalous and horrific sin. There are sins that you and I may not think of as scandalous or horrific, but God does. I understand that there are normal and natural ways of contracting leprosy. Yet usually leprosy was the judgment of God revealed against an individual. Incidentally, I read years ago, and I believe it is true, that even armadillos carry leprosy, so you need to be careful when dealing with armadillos as well. As you read through the Bible, however, you will find that many times leprosy was inflicted because of God's judgment.

You remember 2 Samuel chapter 3, where Joab murdered Abner the son of Ner. Joab and Abner were cousins. Joab and Abishai, his brother, murdered Abner because Abner had killed Asahel, their brother, in battle. Really, it was not Abner's fault. Abner pleaded with Asahel to stop following him and let him alone, but Asahel would not listen. In defending himself, Abner killed Asahel. Then Joab came back and murdered Abner.

David was unaware of it; in fact, he had just entered into a covenant with Abner. When David learned what Joab had done, he placed a curse upon him: "And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread." All these things were a curse, and they should come upon Joab and his house because of this scandalous and horrific sin.

Consider another example in the account of Elisha and Naaman the Syrian. Naaman had brought much silver, garments, and perhaps gold to be healed of his leprosy. Elisha sent his servant Gehazi to tell Naaman, "Go wash seven times in the Jordan River and you will be clean." Naaman turned away in great rage, but one of his men reasoned, "If the prophet had bid you to do some great thing, would you not have done it?" Since the command was easy and simple, Naaman washed in the Jordan seven times and was

clean. He then tried to pay Elisha, but Elisha refused, saying, "This is not a time to receive money."

Naaman turned and left, but Gehazi said, "My master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, but I will take somewhat of him." He ran after Naaman, who stopped and asked what was the matter. Gehazi replied that some young prophets had come to his master's house and asked whether Naaman would give them something. Naaman gave silver and garments to his servants, who carried them back, and Gehazi hid them. When Gehazi returned to Elisha, Elisha asked, "Whither wentest thou, Gehazi?" Gehazi answered, "Thy servant went no whither." Elisha replied, "Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?"

Transcript variant (JW01590):

And he said, "All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments." And Naaman said, "Be content, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him. And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?"

Listen to the judgment recorded in 2 Kings 5:27: "The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow." Gehazi lied, defrauded, and stole, and his reward was leprosy. All the money he had taken could do him no good, because he could not spend it as a leper. It was plainly the judgment of God upon him.

You remember also King Uzziah. He was a godly man who reigned fifty-two years in Judah and did many good things. But when he was old, his heart was lifted up, and he entered the temple

of God to offer incense. Azariah and about eighty-five priests confronted him, saying, "Get out of here. Get out of here."

"This is not going to be for your honor." Uzziah got angry, and just as he got angry, the leprosy began in his forehead. The Bible says, "Yea, he himself hasted to go out." In 2 Kings 15:5, it says, "And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son was over the house, judging the people of the land."

So he lost his rulership because of his arrogance. When you look at Numbers 12:1, you can understand why God judged Miriam so strenuously. The Bible says, "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman." Notice: "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses." Who was named first? Miriam. She is listed first because she was the leader and the chief transgressor.

The Nature of Miriam's Sin

It is true that Eve was first in the transgression and was punished. But sin came into the world by Adam because the covenant of God was with Adam. Here Miriam is the leader and the transgressor, while Aaron was drawn into this by her. When you read this chapter, Aaron was the one who very quickly acknowledged and confessed the sin. Therefore Miriam was very strenuously judged by God. There are many facets to this sin; we could spend several weeks trying to explore and explain it.

This sin of Miriam and Aaron was not simply an attack upon Moses and his leadership. It was also an attack upon God for His choice and use of Moses as the leader. The sin was directly against Moses, but indirectly against God. Consider the exceeding grief this must have caused Moses. Stop and think: this attack came from his own family. It did not come from the Egyptians, the Canaanites, or even the people he was leading. It came from his brother and his sister.

Alice can tell you this. I told her a number of times over the years, "I can take anything that anybody can throw at me. But what would kill me is that she turned against me."

I can have war anywhere else, but I want peace at home. The people had been rebelling against Moses since he brought them out of Egypt, and now Miriam and Aaron were turning against him as well.

Moses was not only a prophet; the Bible tells us that Moses was also a king. Deuteronomy 33:5 says, “And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together.” Miriam and Aaron were attacking not merely Moses as a man, but Moses as a prophet, Moses as God’s choice, and Moses as a king. Their attack upon Moses was an attack upon God’s royal authority in choosing Moses, establishing Moses, and putting him in the place of leadership.

The Bible says, “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married.” An attack upon a man’s family is an attack upon himself. If you attack Alice, you are attacking me. If you attack Lorraine, you are attacking Steve. Why? The two are one. You cannot separate what God has joined together. Here, then, was an attack upon Moses’ family by his family. You have heard the old adage that familiarity breeds contempt. Certainly, they were very familiar with Moses.

When you stop and think about this, this thought hit my mind this morning, and I thought, I'm going to check this out: How easily they attack Moses. Did you know that Moses is called “Moses the man of God” six times in the Bible? When you get to Psalm 90, which is a prayer of Moses, the title is, “A Prayer of Moses the man of God.” If you look up “Moses the servant of God,” or “the servant of the LORD,” you'll be amazed. There are, I don't know, thirty, forty, or fifty references to Moses being the servant of the Lord. Yet here they are, attacking the one who is God's man and God's servant.

They are doing so because they are brother and sister, and familiarity does indeed breed contempt. Let me show you how contemptuous they are. Look in your Bibles in Numbers 12 and verse 2. Here is arrogance, pride, and contempt: “And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.” May I tell you what they were

saying? We don't need Moses. He is not the only one God can use. God can use us just as He is using Moses. We don't need Moses.

We can usurp His authority and His position. It doesn't really matter. May I remind you of something? God was already using Miriam and Aaron. Miriam is called in the Bible a prophetess, and Aaron was the priest. God was using Miriam and Aaron in different ways.

Now, when the Bible says that Miriam was a prophetess, that does not mean that she preached. It does not mean that she prophesied and foretold—not at all. In Exodus chapter 15, you will see that she is called a prophetess, but you will also see what she did: “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

What was Miriam doing? She was singing with the women and leading them in song, a biblical thought. She is called a prophetess in that sense of the word. But she was not a prophet in the sense that she was preaching, or even in the sense that she was foretelling what was coming to pass.

Now, I want you to understand that there is a prophesying with music in the Bible, and it's not just women who prophesied with music, it's men as well. If you will turn in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles chapter 25. 1 Chronicles chapter 25. Look if you would please, beginning there with verse 1. 1 Chronicles chapter 25 and verse 1. Watch carefully. "Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph," who were musicians by the way, "separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was: of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied according to the order of the king." Now note, if you would please, in verse 1 the Bible says that these individuals prophesied. How did they

prophesy? With harps and with psalteries and with cymbals. They were singing, playing music.

The Psalms in all probability. Moses wrote Psalm 90.

Now skip down if you would please to verses 5 and 6. "All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman." Now, note, if you would please, in verse 2 the Bible said, "they prophesied according to the order of the king." In other words, this is not something that God is commanding them to do particularly right now. This is something that David has said, this is how you prophesy. This is your ministry. You play the instruments. You sing.

So it's called prophesying with music. It's not preaching. They were not preachers. They were musicians.

Now, let me show you something else. I want you to look in the Bible very quickly to the book of Micah chapter 6 because I made the statement earlier that God was already using Miriam and Aaron in different areas. Not everybody has the same gifts and not everybody has the same ministry. So in Micah chapter 6 and verse 4, God says, "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." Isn't that amazing? God said, I sent all three of them, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Now, back in Numbers 12 and verse 1, and that's a very interesting passage there, because the Bible says in Numbers 12 and verse 1, "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses."

Transcript variant (JW01590):

They're the ones that lifted up their voice against Moses. But note, if you would, "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses."

God said, “I sent all three of them.” Do you know who was the oldest child? Moses was the youngest; Aaron was three years older than Moses; and Miriam was the oldest. How do I know that? When Moses was put in an ark as a baby in the river, Pharaoh’s

daughter sent a maid to draw him out. Who said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" It was Miriam. A three-year-old boy would not have been out saying that like Aaron. No, Miriam was the oldest. She was probably saying in Numbers 12, "I'm the oldest. I'm taking charge here."

It is like years ago, when our grandchildren were little. Our oldest grandchild is a granddaughter, and she was perhaps five, six, seven, or eight years old. All the grandchildren were down at the pond fishing, except Renee. Renee had never fished before in her life, but she walked up and down the bank telling all the others how to fish. Violet, the oldest grandson, said, "Renee, if you would just shut up, maybe the fish will bite." Perhaps this was Miriam: "I'm the oldest. I ought to have some say in this."

The point is that God was already using Miriam, Aaron, and Moses. Yet they were not satisfied with their service. They wanted to take Moses' place, and their attack was a direct attack upon Moses because they attacked Zipporah, his wife. It was also an indirect attack upon the providence of God, because in God's providence He gave Zipporah to Moses as his wife.

I tell people one thing for sure: I know it is God's will for me to be married to Alice, because I have been married to her for fifty-eight years. Obviously, that is the providence of God. It was the providence of God in the life of Moses and Zipporah as well. So what are we to learn when God says, "You better remember what I did to Miriam"? We are to learn that we cannot attack one another without displeasing God and incurring His wrath. Look around at the Christians who cut one another to pieces.

I hate to say this, but preachers are the worst in this. They have absolutely no regard sometimes for their other brethren in the Lord. They will denigrate, mock, and make fun of others; they will do anything and everything seemingly to tear one down so that they can elevate themselves. I have often said, if our enemies really understood sin, rebellion, and wickedness, then they would just leave us alone and we would kill ourselves.

It is like that passage in Galatians 5:15, where the Apostle Paul told those Galatian Christians, “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” The truth of the matter is, flesh is still flesh, even in a religious form. It did not matter how religious they were, or how good God was using Miriam or Aaron. They were now attacking Moses.

Moses' Meekness and Intercession

Moses, being meek—in fact, the Bible tells us he was the meekest man on earth—did not defend himself. He did not have to, because the Bible says, “And the LORD heard it.” And He said, “You three, come in the tabernacle before me.” God said, “If I raise up a prophet, I’ll show myself to him in a dream or a vision. But it’s not like that between me and my servant Moses. I’ll speak with him mouth to mouth.” He can see the outline, the shape. How could you speak against Moses?

God departed, and Miriam turned into a leper. Aaron quickly confessed and acknowledged his sin, and asked Moses to pray. In Numbers chapter 12, verse 9, the Bible says: “And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.”

“Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother’s womb. And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.” Watch verse fourteen: “And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.” Her father just spit in her face. No, she was not getting away with this. Notice verse 11: “And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord.”

He was willing to be in submission: “Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the

flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee."

Moses did not look at Miriam when she became a leper and say, "Ha! Well, you got what you deserved, didn't you, honey?" He did not do that. Aaron begged him to pray, and he prayed. The very one against whom Miriam had sinned was now interceding on her behalf.

I believe that Moses' prayer availed. How can I say that? Uzziah and Gehazi died a leper, but God said that Miriam would suffer for seven days, and then she could be moved back again. The very one against whom she had sinned was the intercessor on her behalf.

When we sin, we sin against the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says in 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." Verse 2 says, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We are the ones who sin against Him, yet He is the very one interceding for us. If He did not intercede for us, we would really be in trouble.

Applications: Warnings for Believers

God is not going to overlook sins, even in the best of His saints. If we act scandalously, we will be judged by Him. Some sins are very scandalous and horrific, but we do not consider them so. How many have mocked and made fun of their sisters-in-law, their brothers-in-law, or the preacher and his wife? We do not consider that horrific, but God did. God said, "Moses is my servant. Moses is my man. And you cannot attack him without attacking me." In fact, sin is far more grievous when it is in the leaders.

If you woke up, got your morning paper, and saw the headline, "Steve Sharpless arrested for robbing the Third National Bank," you might say, "I know him. He's got to be crazy. He's got to be insane. Something happened to that man." If he did rob the bank, that would be bad, wouldn't it? But what if the headline read, "Pastor John Weaver was arrested for robbing the Third National Bank"? Now it would be even worse.

He knew better, but I preached against it for 57 years. Sin is always bad, but it is even worse when it is in those who know better.

Second, do not think that we are going to escape the consequences of our sins. The law of leprosy was not nullified just because it was Miriam who became leprous. She had to be shut out of the camp just like any other leper. She had to come back and offer the sacrifices just like any other leper. She had to be declared clean by the priest just like any other leper. It does not matter. In fact, in James 3 and verse 1, the Bible says, “Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.”

Clearly, God’s law is not going to be set aside just because one of His saints sins. Matthew Henry said it like this: “The plague of leprosy being usually a particular mark of God's displeasure for sin, he in whom the signs of it did appear ought not to conceal it, nor cut out the signs of it, nor apply to the physician for relief, but he must go to the priest and follow his directions. Thus, those that feel their consciences under guilt and wrath must not cover it, nor endeavor to shake off their convictions, but by repentance and prayer and humble confession take the appointed way to peace and pardon, which of course is through the Lord Jesus Christ.”

When God says, “Take heed, take heed, and you remember what I did to Miriam by the way when you came out of Egypt,” He is saying that we better be warned and understand that the will of the flesh has absolutely no place in the ministry and no place in the worship of God. Miriam is brought forth as a dissuasive warning, a dissuasive example. She was unwilling to remain in her place of subordination and to continue to serve in the area which God gave her. She wanted to rebel, and she wanted the place of Moses. She wanted to run things. Unhappily, rebellion is not just the sin of women; it is also the sin of men.

We have to understand something: God gave us our positions in life and our gifts. We did not choose our gifts. I had a pastor friend who has been dead many years. He was one of the most loving, kind, gracious individuals I have ever known. One day, he looked at me and said, "Brother Weaver, I would give anything to know the Bible the way you know the Bible." I answered, "My brother, I

would give anything to be able to love the way you love." He had his gift; I had my gift.

You cannot say, "God, I must have this one." No. God gives us our position and our gifts. It is one thing to desire to grow in our gift and position, to honor God and bring more glory to Him. It is quite another thing to be envious, jealous, and desirous of someone who is above us.

We can rejoice that God is using any of us, that we have any ministry at all, and that He lets us live and serve Him, even if it is only doing what we normally do every day. We can be thankful for that. I am thankful for those individuals whom God is using even more than He is using me. I am not upset because someone teaches more people than I teach, or because people have larger works than I have. That is between them and God. I am thankful. I would to God that more men had much larger works.

Joshua ran to Moses and said, "My lord, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp." Moses said, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!" I would want all to prophesy, all to be able to preach and teach the word of God. We cannot be desirous of vain glory. We have to be content with where God has placed us, while using every effort to honor Him even more in our place and position. God says we are not to be desirous of vain glory.

This is why He said, “Remember what I did to Miriam.” Leviticus 19:32 sums up this lesson: “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.” In other words, honoring others who deserve honor is part and parcel of our honor and worship of God. We cannot honor Him unless we honor His servants and His people.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before Thee. We thank You for Your Word and for Your truth. We ask, Lord, that You would teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. Help us, Lord, not only to be content with the position that You put us in, but with the gifts that You gave us. Help us to desire to use those gifts to the best of our ability for Your honor and Your glory. May

we rejoice in all that You do for others, how You build them up, and how You use them. We give Thee praise. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 18

Responsibility and Responding

January 20, 2024

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we come to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word and for Your truth, and, Lord, we pray that You would teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. May Your perfect and holy will be accomplished today. Give us, Lord, an understanding heart, and may we serve Thee in reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

This message was preached to our people back in November. I actually started preparing for this meeting back in November, and when I finished this message, I thought it was so important that I did not want to wait to preach it. Some of our people have heard this message, though probably most of them have forgotten it. I think this is foundational. It is a root message, and I am going to start from here. The other message is one nobody has ever heard.

The Bible says, “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

The Government Cannot Be Relied Upon for Protection

Who is responsible to protect your life, your family, and your property? Many take the position that it is the responsibility of the government to protect them, and therefore they do absolutely nothing to prepare themselves or their families. The interesting thing is that I came across this article this morning. There was a whole article, and I took a couple of paragraphs from it.

In fact, one recent survey discovered that a whopping 71.2% of all Americans have no faith in the United States government to save them or prevent a doomsday event. Now listen to this. If you actually believe that the government will be there to rescue you when things really start hitting the fan, you're being delusional. If the emergency supplies that the government has on hand were equally divided among the entire population—330 million Americans, not counting the 30 million illegal immigrants—they would not last a single day.

So many people think that somehow the government's going to come in and save them. A few tend to believe that the police or the deputies or the sheriff somehow will protect them and their property.

And you have to remember this, when you really need them, they're at least 30 minutes away. And usually, law enforcement arrives just in time to secure the crime scene. In other words, it's over by that time. You're a victim, and you're dead. Your property is stolen, and your family probably has been murdered as well. Here's a quote it would pay you to remember. This quote is from Darren L. Hutchinson, who happened to be a professor and associate dean at the University of Florida School of Law. Here's what he said. "Neither the Constitution nor state law imposes a general duty upon police officers or other governmental officials to protect individual persons from harm, even when they know harm will occur. Police can watch someone attack you, refuse to

intervene, and not violate the Constitution. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the government has only a duty to protect persons who are in custody." So if you want to be protected by the cops, you need to get arrested. Otherwise, they have absolutely no duty to protect you at all.

So here's the biblical truth, and I'm going to enunciate this from the Bible, and that is you are responsible for your life, you're responsible for your family, you're responsible for your property, you are the first responder. Not the cops, not the firemen, you are the first responder. It's not up to your neighbors, it is up to you. You're responsible, and if you do not learn how to protect yourself, and have the means to protect yourself, then you're going to be a victim. One man said it like this, "When you don't think of yourself as the first responder, your destiny is to be the first victim." And that's certainly true.

The Biblical Command to Provide

Here is a recent headline, and I want you to listen carefully. Terrorist activity within the continental United States and general violent crimes are increasing exponentially and are likely to get much worse. The situation is so discouraging that our leftist media is desperately and deliberately under-reporting all violent crime because it makes the Democrat darlings look bad. I hope you've been keeping up with the fact that, at the border, a number of these illegal immigrants coming across have been caught with IEDs, improvised explosive devices.

I am simply telling you that it is up to you to learn to be responsible. In your Bibles, 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 8 says, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he denied the faith, he's worse than an infidel."

Before examining this message and truth from 1 Timothy 5:8, consider its remote context, and then the immediate context in which verse 8 occurs. In 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15, you will find the theme of the book: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Everything in 1 Timothy, and actually 2 Timothy, is based

upon how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God, especially when you get to 1 Timothy chapter 2.

When we talk about families, if you are a believer, you actually have two families. You have the family of faith, and then you have your own personal, physical family as well. Therefore, the widest application of what I am going to say would be to our church, to our fellow believers in Jesus Christ, and secondly to our immediate family.

In 1 Timothy 5:3-6, the Bible says, "Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

Now look what he says in verse 7: "And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless." The passage continues, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he denied the faith, he's worse than an infidel."

What in the world does the word "charge" mean? The Greek word happens to be paraggellō, and it is translated in our Bibles as "charge," as "command," and as "commandment." I want you to see this word and how it is used. Look at 1 Timothy 1:3-5. The Apostle Paul tells Timothy, "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." In verse 3, Paul said, "And I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine." The word "charge" does not mean a suggestion or advice. The word "charge" is actually the word "command."

In verse 5, he says, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned.” What commandment is he talking about? If we go back to verse 3, where he said, “I gave the charge,” it is the same word, paraggellō, now translated as “commandment” in verse 5. A charge, then, is indeed a commandment.

Paul tells Timothy, in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 7, “These things give in charge.” He is not talking about giving suggestions or advice; he is saying, “You give them a commandment.” Why are we to be given this commandment? The answer is found in verse 7: that we may be blameless.

The word “blameless” refers to being blameless, to being unrebukeable, to be without censure, and without being condemned. In fact, the Bible tells us in Philippians chapter 2 and verse 15, “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” So he is saying, once again, that we should be without rebuke. Paul is giving this commandment: you and I are to provide for our own, especially of our own household. He says this is the commandment, and he is giving it to us, that we may be blameless.

Look at verse 8 again. “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith. He is worse than an infidel.” Notice that he denied the faith and he is worse than an infidel. Do you see a picture? I want you to think about this. Usually the husband and the father, of course, is the head of the house. That is the way the Word of God has ordained it.

In verse four, he says, “But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents, for this is good and acceptable before God.” Notice that he talks about children and nephews. Let me put it this way: Suppose that Alice and I both become unable to work—we are sick and unable to do anything. Who is responsible to take care of Alice and me? Our children. That is a fact. What if we have no children? Then he mentions nephews.

In other words, responsibility belongs first to the immediate family and then to the extended family. Look again at verse four: “But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home.” What is piety? It is godliness; it is holiness. Now, how in the world do children and nephews show piety at home?

The Bible says, “...and to requite their parents.” The word “requite” means to pay back. We took care of our children when they could not take care of themselves. We fed them, clothed them, and educated them. Now, when parents become elderly and cannot take care of themselves, God says it is the children’s turn to pay them back. It is not the government’s responsibility to take care of your elderly; it is your responsibility.

Alice and I took care of her mother until she died. We took care of my mother until she died. Our fathers both died early. In fact, Alice’s mother lived with us for seventeen years; during the last three years, she lived in the house with us because she could not live alone. The Bible says that we are to take care of those who depend on us and pay back what we have received.

When you consider that the husband and father is the head of the house, God has designated him as the provider. Look back at verse 8: “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.” Do you realize that the only thing you have to do to deny the faith and be worse than an infidel is to deny and not fulfill your responsibility? If you do not fulfill your responsibility, the Bible says that you have denied the faith and are worse than an infidel.

Now, when we think about provision, the first things we think about are food and clothing. Stop and think about that: you've got hungry children; you've got children that need all kinds of clothes. That is exactly what we think about. But let me tell you something about the word “provision”: just because we think about food and clothing does not mean that is exactly what the word means. In 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 8, “provision” is a Greek word.

The word is pronoeō. “Pro” is a preposition meaning “before.” “Noeō” means to think and to consider, and it comes from the Greek word “nous,” which is the mind. So the word “provide” means that you are thinking beforehand, understanding beforehand, perceiving beforehand, and considering beforehand. It does not simply deal with food and clothing; it also deals with every provision imaginable. To provide means to perceive with the mind and to understand with the mind. It means to heed, ponder, and consider.

Since you understand how broad this word is, provide does not refer only to food and clothing. Have you provided for the defense of your family? Have you provided for the protection of your family? Have you provided for the medical care of your family? We need to understand that the word “provide” means far more than what we would simply consider food and clothing.

The Necessity of Being Armed and Prepared

Look at 1 Timothy 5, verse 8: “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house,” specially for those of his own house, “he denied the faith and he's worse than an infidel.” If you do not provide for the lives, safety, and protection of your family, God says that you are worse than an infidel and that you have basically denied the faith.

Harry Brown said, “The police can't stop an intruder, mugger, or stalker from hurting you. They can pursue him only after he's hurt or killed you. Protecting yourself from harm is your responsibility, and you are far less likely to be hurt in a neighborhood of gun owners than in one of disarmed citizens, even if you don't own a gun yourself.” That is true.

There was a man named Jack Potter, known as Fighting Jack Potter. He was a Confederate soldier and, after the war, a Methodist circuit riding preacher. He said, “I'm not so anxious to wear a martyr's crown as to sacrifice my life when God requires me to use means to preserve it. It is no evidence of a preacher's want of trust in God when he carries a gun to shield his life in the time of peril.”

"It would be the most sinful presumption not to do so. Indeed, I do not carry a gun because I'm afraid to die, but because it is a duty and a means to preserve life." Wow.

God places a very high value on the family and on family protection. In Luke 11:21, our Lord says, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace."

First, note that he talks about a strong man. A strong man is someone who is strong not just in body, but also in mind. Secondly, the Bible says he is a strong armed man. The word "armed" in the Greek, kathoplizō, literally means furnished with arms. In other words, he has more than one; he is furnished with arms.

Third, the Bible says he keeps, or guards and protects, himself and his goods. In order to do so, he has to be a strong man and an armed man, one furnished with arms.

Here is another reason why you should understand family protection and self-protection. God not only requires it, but He tells you that, if you are going to provide for the safety of your family, you had better be thinking ahead. Just because you are armed, just because you are furnished with arms, does not mean that this is sufficient in and of itself. Look at verse 22: "But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

It is wise to consider that I need to protect my family. It is wise to consider that I must be furnished with arms and have an ample supply of arms to do what God requires me to do. But I must also consider this: What if a stronger man comes along with more arms? What if a stronger individual or a stronger group comes along? I have to consider that as well. The last meeting we had was on community, where believers would actually come together.

Do you understand that this is exactly what our Lord is hinting at here? If you are alone, no matter what you have, you cannot defend yourself, your family, or your property. It is impossible. No one can stay awake twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and no one can do everything that needs to be done. Do you

understand? This is how the early settlers and frontiersmen protected themselves. If they were alone, they were easy targets.

So they came into communities and groups, and sometimes they even built a little fort. They always had someone who would come to their aid when aid was needed. One of our problems is that you and I have lived in relative safety for so long that we do not think anything like this can happen to us. It is cognitive dissonance: it happens somewhere else, but it is never going to happen here; it happens to other people, but it will never happen to us. That is how we think.

I will tell you this right now. I have a friend, some of you know him, named Michael Danley. He is a police officer and has been for I do not know how many years; he lacks about two years before retiring. He called me this past week and said, “I want to tell you something. I want you to convey this to your people.” I said, “Fine, I’ll be glad to.”

Real-Life Examples and Current Threats

He said, “I carry everywhere I go, even when I’m off duty. So does my family.” In fact, I have had his family down here and helped train him and his family. But he said, “We went to a little out-of-the-way Chinese restaurant out in the boonies. So I left my weapon in the car.”

Now, Michael is a big man—not fat or flabby, just big. His boys are big, about six-four or six-five, and strong as oxen. They were inside. Michael told me, “I went into the bathroom to wash my hands before we ate. Just as I was washing my hands, someone was banging loudly on the door, cursing, ‘Get out of there, get out of there.’ It was a big black man, and one of my boys hollered, ‘Dad, watch out, he’s got a gun.’” Michael said, “There I was in the bathroom without my weapon. When I unlocked the door, the man ran in, cussing me.”

He said, "I went around to the manager, the owner, whoever it was, and I said, 'What's wrong with him?' The man said, 'He just hates white people.'" The man then came out of the bathroom and began to antagonize Michael and curse him. Michael looked at the

owner and said, "Well, we're just going to leave." He followed them outside while his children and wife went ahead and got in the car.

He said, "I had a choice whether I should reach in and try to grab my weapon or just jump in the car and leave. But he already had his weapon out. That would have been foolish for me. So the children opened the door for me. I jumped in and drove off. I called the local law enforcement there and swore out a warrant for his arrest."

But you see what I mean. Here is a man who has been a cop all of his life, and he said, "I just never dreamed something like this would happen in that one little out-of-the-way restaurant." This is what I'm talking about. Let me give you a recent headline from the Highland County Press out of Ohio. This was just this past year, a few months back: "Experts warn Hamas-connected terrorists crossing U.S. border."

Here are the first three short paragraphs of that article: "Hundreds of immigrants on the federal terror watch list have been caught at the southern and northern U.S. borders in recent years, and national security experts say there's a real threat of a terrorist attack on American soil as a result. With the conflict between Israel and Gaza-based terrorist group Hamas escalating, that threat has only grown. U.S. Customs and Border Protection San Diego field office warns that Hamas may attempt to send individuals to the United States through the southern border."

The truth of the matter is, they're already here. And so are 30,000 Chinese communist soldiers. Where in the world do you think all of these people are coming across the border? They're single military-age men; they're not coming with wives and children. Ohio is even talking about this. In other words, these terrorist cells have already been pre-positioned. Years ago they were talking about the Islamic training camps around Jessup, Georgia, and around other places as well. They're all over the country.

So here is the question: What in the world are you going to do when one of these groups approaches your family, your property, your home? What is going to transpire? Are you going to have

help? Are you going to be alone? Are you going to be outnumbered? Are you going to be outgunned?

The Importance of Community and Communication

Have you provided for a team? Have you worked with your neighbors? Have you worked with your family? Have you asked others to help you? Scripture not only teaches that we need help; it teaches that two are more than one. Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 says, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." God is saying that it is good to have two or three people around who will help you and work with you.

Frederic Bastiat, if you have never read his little book on the law, I would encourage you to do so. It is a very short book. He was a Frenchman, and it is a classic work. In one of his paragraphs he said, "If every person has a right to defend, even by force, his person, his liberty, and his property, then it follows that a group of men have the right to organize and support a common force to protect their rights constantly."

Here is a thought to consider concerning provision. If you cannot reach each other, and cannot communicate with each other, you cannot help each other. How are you going to communicate if the power grid is down? How are you going to communicate if the electricity is turned off? How are you going to communicate if all the Internet is down? That is why little handheld radios can be useful. They can reach five miles, and with an antenna fifteen or twenty miles, sometimes more with larger equipment. In one of our classes, we built an antenna, hooked everything up, and talked over our radio with a man in New York. It is amazing what some of these little things can do when you have the right equipment. Have you thought about this? When that cell phone is not working, what in the world are you going to use?

This is why we need community and like-minded people. We must understand that we have a family of faith and a physical family as well. In other words, we must learn to take responsibility for our own lives, our own families, and our own property. It is just that simple.

Regarding EMP, an electromagnetic pulse attack, what are we talking about? A natural calamity—a tornado, a hurricane, or floods? Stop and think about this. When those things happen, the stores are usually looted. Look at what happened in Hurricane Katrina, at all the hurricanes in Texas, and at the stadium where everybody was being housed. When there is no food left and nothing to steal, the hordes will be looking. If they see a garden, they will assume that you have food, canned food, or stored food, and they are coming to see you.

That is, you are next on their list. It is just that simple. All you have to do is look at what is happening with these mobs in larger cities. They are going into jewelry stores, convenience stores, and high-expensive stores, thirty, forty, and fifty of them at one time, stealing everything they can and running out. No one stops them, because no one is going to shoot them. They are devastating and destroying everything.

Colonel Jeff Cooper is now dead, but he said, “One cannot legislate the maniacs off the street. These maniacs can only be shut down by an armed citizenry. Indeed, bad things can happen in nations where the citizenry is armed, but not as bad as those which seem to be threatening our disarmed citizenry in this country at this time.”

He also said, “You can say ‘stop,’ or you can say ‘alto,’ or use any word you think will work. But I have found that a large bore muzzle pointed at someone's head is pretty much the universal language.” That will make someone stop.

Senator Larry Craig said, “The first right of every human being is the right of self-defense. Without that right, all other rights are meaningless. The right of self-defense is not something the government bestows upon its citizens. It is an inalienable right, older than the Constitution itself. It existed prior to government

and prior to the social contract of our Constitution." Certainly, we have an inalienable right not only to defend ourselves, but also to stand together to defend ourselves, to come together to preserve our lives. It is our God-given right.

The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," could actually read, "Thou shalt not murder," or, "Thou shalt not take life apart from God's directive." That is the negative. The positive is, "Thou shalt preserve life." Therefore, you have a duty and a responsibility to preserve your life, the life of your family, and the life of your neighbors as well.

In fact, the Bible says in Psalm 82:3, "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy." In 1 Timothy 5:8, when he says, "But if any will not provide for his own," the word provide means to think beforehand, to consider beforehand. It does not deal simply with food or clothing; it means everything your family would need for protection. If you have to think beforehand, conceive with the mind beforehand, and prepare in your mind beforehand, here is another question: Have you seriously thought about and prepared for medical emergencies?

Medical Preparedness and Self-Reliance

Do not tell me, "Well, I'm not a doctor. I'm not a nurse. I'm not an EMT. I'm not a paramedic." Neither am I, and most people are not. But I know how to suture. I have sewed up animals and humans. I know how to stop bleeding and pack a wound. I am not a doctor. That is why I want you to look at some of these books. There are so many things you can learn. You can even go to your local tech school and learn CPR and basic medicine.

Have you ever considered what is going to happen medically when there are no hospitals, no clinics, and no one around? If an EMP happens, whether naturally or as an act of war, you are not going to have a hospital, electricity, or anything. You are going to have to take care of yourself. How in the world did people on the frontier take care of medical emergencies? How did women have babies before there were hospitals? How did people set broken bones when there was no doctor around? How did people deal with animal attacks?

If you have never heard my message on Mountain Man, Jedediah Strong Smith, I encourage you to listen to it. Jedediah Smith was a Christian. He was attacked by a grizzly bear. On his second expedition, the bear came out of the thicket and mauled Smith violently, throwing him to the ground, smashing his ribs, and literally ripping off his scalp. When the attack was over, the scalp was hanging on his head by an ear. Smith instructed Jim Clyman to sew it back on.

Remember, we do not have anything to deaden the pain. There was no lidocaine back then. Smith instructed Jim Clyman to sew his ear back on. Clyman did the best he could, but thought nothing could be done for the severed ear. Smith insisted that he try. According to Clyman, "I put my needle, sticking it in through and through and over and over, laying the lacerated parts together as nice as I could with my hands." After two weeks of rest, Smith returned to his duty as captain of the party. He sat there with nothing to deaden his pain, having everything sewn back onto his scalp and ear.

If you think that is something, you ought to read about Hugh Glass, another mountain man. Hugh Glass was mauled terribly by a grizzly bear, but he was not dead. His friends thought he would die at any time. The Indians were around, and his friends were afraid of an Indian attack, so they took his knife and weapon and left him to die. Hugh Glass came to.

He crawled to the river, washed his wounds, drank some water, and crawled on his hands and knees until he found carrion, a dead carcass. He ate some of the meat. When he gained strength, he began to walk and stumble, covering 200 miles until he came to Fort Kiowa, and he lived. I am simply pointing out the fact: we need to learn some things and learn to do some things for ourselves.

You can buy medical books and read. You can buy herbal books, medical supplies, and teach yourself basic medicine. You can have supplies on hand for short-term and even long-term emergencies. Back in November, I spoke for three hours at one conference on preparedness—preparedness to survive. I pointed out that fish antibiotics, or animal antibiotics, are the same as our antibiotics.

You need to know the difference in weight and how to apply them. There are now two companies where you can stock up on antibiotics and whatever else you need: Jase Medical, spelled J-A-S-E, and the Wellness Company, associated with Dr. Peter McCullough. You go online, fill out the form, and they send it to a doctor. The doctor signs off on it, and they send you the kit, containing various antibiotics and even ivermectin. Both companies are very good. I am simply saying that you can.

So let me ask this question again. Whose responsibility is it to keep your family not just fed and not just clothed, but protected and also prepared for medical emergencies? In other words, it is your responsibility. I want you to understand something. It is not your responsibility to feed the whole world or take care of the whole neighborhood. It is your responsibility to take care of your family, which includes your physical family and your church family as well.

Paul said, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.” He continues, “Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”

“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” It is your job, it is your responsibility to take care of your family and provide for their every need.

Yes, there is biblical charity, and I've got messages on that. I understand charity. I understand that. But charity does not extend to supporting the indolent, the lazy, the sluggards who will not work and provide for themselves. Hungry men will usually do one of two things: they will either go to work or steal. If someone is willing to work, you might be willing to share. But if someone wants to steal, then you have to deal with that problem.

Let me ask you a question. If times get really, really tough, and you have just enough to take care of your family, and I come along with my little children and ask you to share, here is my question:

are you going to take the bread out of your children's mouth and give it to my children? You see what I'm trying to say? I'm simply pointing out the fact that we have a responsibility to prepare.

Balancing Preparation with Trust in God

In all things, we have to learn to trust the Lord Jesus Christ. David said this over and over in the Psalms. For instance, in Psalm 7:10 he said, “My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.” Then in Psalm 31:2 he says, “Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.” And then he says, “Because of his strength”—that is, the enemy’s strength—“will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.”

While we prepare, and while we may be willing and able to defend ourselves, that does not mean that we trust in our provisions. It does not mean that we trust in our abilities. It means that we must trust in God and God alone. We must be wise, as He commands us: “be wise as serpents.” Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.

The point I am trying to make is your responsibility. It is your responsibility to take care of your family. It is not the government’s job. It is not the job of your neighbor. It is your responsibility. I will deal with some of those matters later, but this is the point right now.

God said, again, “If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he’s worse than an infidel. He’s denied the faith.” All you have to do to be worse than an infidel and deny the faith is to deny your responsibility. The old saying, which you have heard all your life, is, “Trust in the Lord and keep your powder dry.”

What did the Bible say in Psalm 127:1? “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.” So all of our preparations, even though we are responsible to prepare, are worthless unless God sovereignly protects us. What did He say? He said, “If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he’s denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.” God

requires you to provide everything that your family needs. We cannot deny our responsibility. This message is absolutely fundamental because we cannot deny our responsibility. Let us pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we love Thee. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Your truth. And we ask, Father, that You make us see and help us to see, Lord, our responsibility. And help us to understand Thy truth and apply it to our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask. Amen.

CHAPTER 19

Creating A Life Giving Home

August 7, 2025

It is a joy to be here, and I am thankful to see everyone. Good gracious alive, all these young people are up front, and I am thankful they are here. I could not help but smile because Kathy Nelson did not know what she said that brought back memories to me. We were eating, and she and Brother Jim were across from me, and she was messing with her chicken.

She said, “You just need to pick this up with your fingers.” I said, “It’s perfectly lawful and legitimate to pick up chicken with your fingers.” Some of you may remember Congressman Larry McDonald. He was supposedly shot down in the Korean jetliner 007. You remember that years ago? Congressman McDonald was down in Florida speaking at one of these dinner engagements. After everybody finished eating, they served chicken, and he got up to speak.

He said, “I can tell which of you people are from the north and which are from the south by the way you eat your chicken. Northerners use forks and knives; Southerners use their fingers. You want to know why Southerners use their fingers? Because you

Yankees stole our silverware." You may think I am joking when I say that, but that is not true. Benjamin Butler, "Beast" Butler, had another nickname, "Spoons" Butler, because he stole silverware. He was the Yankee military general over Louisiana. And so it was interesting, that is for sure. I am certainly glad to be here and glad to see each one of you again.

Introduction: The Deceptive Title

The title of this message, "Creating a Life-Giving Home," is deceiving. The reason is that only God can give life. God is the giver of physical life, mental life, emotional life, financial life, and spiritual life. All life stems from Him, and there is no life apart from God. That is for sure. I thought about 1 Corinthians 11:3: "But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God."

At the same time, I realize that it is possible to have a home where life is prized, celebrated, and sought. We must remember the passage in Jeremiah 29:13, when God said, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." A life-giving home, based upon Jeremiah 29:13, is one that seeks the Lord, searches for Him in every aspect of life, and searches for Him with all of its heart. In other words, a life-giving home, or a home where life is prized, is one where God is honored, obeyed, and worshiped in the biblical manner.

Biblical Examples of Life-Giving and Death-Giving Homes

In the book of Joshua, chapter 2 and verse 18, we see that Rahab very obviously had a life-giving home: "Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by. And thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee."

This crimson, or scarlet, color of the cord was the color of life—vigorous life, I might add. It was also an expressive sign of the preservation of Rahab's life and that of her family. Her home was marked by a concern for the preservation of life, and the sign in the

window represented the deliverance God would provide for her household. We should note, however, her testimony, beginning with verse 9.

Rahab said unto the men, “I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side, Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt. Neither did there remain any more courage in any man because of you. For the Lord your God He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath.”

“Now, therefore, I pray you swear to me by the Lord, since I've showed you kindness, that you will also show kindness into my father's house and give me a true token. And that you shall save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.” And the men answered her, “Our life are yours. If you would or not this our business, it shall be when the Lord hath given us this land, then we will deal kindly and truly with thee.” Then she let them down by a cord through the window, for her house was upon the town wall.

Note this absolute confession of Rahab. She was not only confessing that God is the one true, living God; she was also confessing His providence, His position, His power, and His absolute sovereignty. She said, “Your God is God.” That was a life-giving home.

John Gill said that Rahab was an instance of the salvation of sinners by the grace of God, for she was a sinner by birth, by practice, and a notorious one. She was an instance of distinguishing grace, free and efficacious grace, a singular instance of it, and became a true repentant and a true believer, a justified person, and saved.

The scarlet thread was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which salvation, redemption, and all the blessings of grace are through it: justification and remission of sins, reconciliation and

atonement, and safety and protection from avenging justice and wrath to come. Certainly, this was a home where life was preserved, sought after, and prized.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Kings 13:11-19 (KJV)

> Here is another home where death was very prominent and prevalent. This was the home of the old prophet in 1 Kings chapter 13, and it was a death-giving home. He lied to the prophet of God and told him that God had told him to seek this prophet and ask him to turn around and come and eat bread and drink water in his home. Of course, God had told him not to do that.
>
> Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel, the words which he had spoken to the king, that is Jeroboam, and them they also told their father. And the father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. Then he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon. And he went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. And he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. Then he said, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee, neither will I eat bread, nor drink water with thee in this place. For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread, nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. And he said unto him, I am a prophet also, as thou art. And an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water.

But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat the bread in his house, and drank the water. And it came to pass, as he sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back. And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but

camest back, and hast eaten bread, and drunk water in this place, of the which the Lord did say unto thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water, Thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulcher of thy fathers. Then it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass to wit for the prophet whom he had brought back.

And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way and slew him, and his carcass was cast in the way. And the ass stood by it, and the lion also stood by the carcass.

There are several lessons to be learned from 1 Kings chapter 13. First, simply because someone says that he is a prophet or a preacher or a professor of faith does not mean that the individual has an absolutely right and godly motive. I do not know what the motive was for this old prophet, but it certainly was not a godly motive, that is for sure.

Secondly, this passage teaches us that we must beware and not believe the counsel of those who counsel us to go contrary to the Word of God, especially that which we know to be the Word of God. The third application is that we are never, ever to conduct ourselves or act in such a way as to deny that which we know to be the Word of God and that which we know to be true.

Creating a life-giving home was the topic that I was assigned. Let me give you something to think about. If the Lord allows me to live one more month, I will be eighty-one. I have never, ever been drunk in my entire life. Never. I have never even had a beer in my entire life. But let me tell you something: I know how to get drunk.

All I have to do is go to a liquor store, buy liquor, and start swigging it down, or go to some party where I am tempted and the liquor is free and engage in it. The next thing you know, I am going to end up drunk.

Now, here is what I am trying to tell you: We cannot create a life-giving home in and of ourselves. But I can tell you how to have a home where God will be present and give life to that home, because that is laid out for us in the Word of God. No home can give life in and of itself; at the same time, we can put ourselves in a position to seek God, seek His blessing, and seek His life, and to

receive that which He has ordained for us in the Bible. It is indeed possible to have a home where life is prized, sought after, and honored, and we need that desperately in our day and time. So how do we create a home in which life is prized and sought after?

The Foundational Truth: God's Order of Headship

Listen carefully. I am going to give you one point, just one point, and I am going to try to drive this truth deep into your hearts and into my heart. It is an absolute basic truth, a foundational truth, and one that is very obviously most often overlooked. Many will not want to hear this truth because it deals with headship and authority.

Look back in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 11:3. I told you we were coming back there. The apostle Paul wrote: “But I would have you to know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

Men and women are equal in three ways. There is another way in which we are not equal. Here is the first way in which men and women are equal: We are equally the creatures of God.

We were created by Him. Secondly, men and women are equally depraved: we are equally sinners, totally depraved, and can do nothing pleasing to God in and of ourselves or in our flesh. Thirdly, we may be equally redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; we may be saved by Him.

However, men and women are positionally different. We may be equal in those three ways, but there is a positional difference. Notice verse three again: “I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man and the head of Christ is God.” The word head occurs three times in that verse.

It happens to be the Greek word kephalē, and it literally means supreme, chief, and prominent. He is saying, basically, in verse 3 that the head of every man is Christ, or the chief and superior of every man is Christ; the chief and superior of every woman is man; and the chief and superior of Christ, in this sense of the word, is God.

This passage talks about the supremacy and headship of God the Father, the supremacy and headship of God the Son, and the supremacy and headship of the man whom God has created. Jesus Christ is God—God in the flesh, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-glorious. But Jesus Christ willingly and voluntarily took upon Himself the seed of Abraham, was made in the likeness of men, and became the servant of the Father.

Read the Gospels. He says, "I came to do that which the Father sent me to do." Over and over He says, "The Father sent me." Since Jesus Christ came to be the servant of the Father, He could accurately say in John 14:28, "My Father is greater than I," because positionally He voluntarily became the servant of the Father. But because He is God in the flesh, He could also accurately say in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one."

In John 5:22–24, the Bible says, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," so that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. "Even as" means equally as they honor the Father. That means Jesus Christ is God, because the Father Himself is God.

Three times we read the word head—three times in this one simple verse. There should be an obvious implication as well: the loss of the head is the loss of life. When you lose your head, it is death. Without the head, the body is dead; without the head, life is destroyed. Without the head, there is nothing but death.

First Corinthians 11 is all about God's orderly way, the way that God has ordained. He has ordained that He is the head over His Son, whom He sent to be His servant. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the head of every man, and the head of every woman is the man. So it is God, Christ, man, woman. That is God's order that He has laid out right here.

The Role of the Wife: Submission and Reverence

Listen carefully, ladies. You may not want to hear this, but hang on; I am going to get to the men shortly, too. This is the absolute truth: God has never ordained a woman to lead. Think about this: Eve tried to lead in the Garden of Eden, and we have the fall. God

designed the woman to follow. I am not talking about women teaching women. I am not talking about women teaching children. I am talking about women teaching men or trying to rule over the man.

Look in your Bibles at Genesis chapter 3, verse 16. Here is what God said to the woman: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Now look at this: "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Now, in the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the word desire there is the word kyrieia. It is used two times in the New Testament. If you want to know what this means, when He said in Genesis 3:16, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband," I will show you. Turn to Romans chapter 6, verse 9, because here you have the same exact Greek word. But this time, this same word is preceded by a negative. Look at Romans 6:9. He says much more than Romans 6:9.

He says, knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, died no more, death hath no more dominion over him. Death hath no more dominion over him. It is the same word for desire. In other words, it means power, rule, or dominion over. No longer does death have power over Jesus Christ. Of course, in the same passage, no longer does death have dominion over man—that is, the saved man—because Jesus Christ has destroyed death, and Jesus Christ is Lord. So he says, death no longer has dominion over Christ. Then he says in verse 11, "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lust thereof." Why should sin not reign in your mortal body? Because sin is not your Lord if you have been saved. Jesus Christ is your Lord. The dominion of sin has been broken. It has been broken through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, if you look in Romans 7, verse 1, you will see the second time this word is used: "Know ye not, brethren, for I speak to them

that know the law, how that the law hath dominion, that is, jurisdiction, rule, power over a man as long as he liveth?"

So when God said to Eve, "and thy desire shall be to thy husband," what He was saying was that the husband is going to have jurisdiction. He is going to have dominion. He is going to have rule. He is going to have power over you.

Now I want you to see how this truth is exemplified. Turn, if you would, to 1 Peter, chapter 3. There are two words that I am going to be dealing with particularly. Look at 1 Peter 3:1: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they, that is, the husbands, behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, or wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel."

He is not saying, ladies, do not look neat. What he is saying is, do not count on the external. Here is what you count on: "But let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God a great price. For after this manner in old time, the holy women also trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and not are afraid with any amazement."

The word subjection in verse 1 is important. The Greek word is hypotassō, made up of hypo, which means under, and tassō, which means to place or put under. It means to be put under someone's control, power, or dominion. The word came into Greek from the Greek military, where troops were arranged in a military fashion, with officers over certain troops. In other words, the troops were under these officers. When it is not used in a military term, it simply means the attitude of voluntarily submitting, voluntarily placing yourself, and assuming responsibility under.

The Bible says that a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God a great price. If you do not hear anything else, hear this: Subjection

that is forced, done in sarcasm or hypocrisy, or done reluctantly or defiantly is not subjection. It is rebellion.

I saw a cartoon years ago. A child was standing up in the seat while the mother was driving and kept telling the child to sit down. The child refused. Finally, the mother reached over, took the child by the hand, jerked the child down, and made the child sit. The child folded her arms and said, "I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside." That is rebellion. That is not subjection or submission. If submission is not willing and voluntary, it is not submission.

The Bible says, "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord." The Greek word for Lord is Kyrios. That word is used not only in reference to a husband; it is used in reference to a prince, and it is even used in reference to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The word Lord means boss, owner, master, and sovereign. That is what it means. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord—master, ruler, boss—that is what the word means.

In Ephesians 5:33, the Word of God says, "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." The passage is speaking about the husbands: "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself." Then it says, "and the wife see that she reverence her husband." The word reverence is a very interesting word.

The verb is phobeō, which means "I fear," and the noun happens to be phobos. It is where we get our English word phobia, as in claustrophobia and arachnophobia, and it means a fear. But, used in this context in Ephesians 5:33, it means to fear, to reverence, to venerate, to treat with deference, and to treat with reverential awe and obedience. The wife is to reverence her husband.

Titus 2:5 speaks of wives as being discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, and obedient to their own husbands, "that the word of God be not blasphemed." The word obedient is exactly the same Greek word that you find in 1 Peter 3. Being in subjection to your husbands is exactly the same word. Notice the verse again: they are to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, and obedient to their

husbands, “that the word of God be not blasphemed.” So when there is no obedience, where there is no subjection—biblical obedience and biblical subjection—the Word of God is blasphemed. Now turn back a few pages to 1 Timothy 2 and look at what it says there.

The Role of the Husband: Loving Leadership and Responsibility

1 Timothy 2:9 says, “In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, gold or pearls, or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness with good works.” Then he says, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Here is why: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” There is the creation order. Then he gives a second reason: “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Not only is there a creation order here, but it was the woman who was deceived. Since the Bible tells you very plainly that the woman being deceived was in the transgression, why then do you read in Romans 5:12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”?

The Bible has just told us that Eve was the first one to sin, because she took and then gave to her husband. Why then did death come through Adam? Because Adam was her head, and Adam was the federal head and representative of each of us. What he did, we did. When he sinned, we sinned. The sin came through him, not particularly through her, although she did sin. It was with Adam that God had made the covenant, and consequently death came by him.

No one escaped submission. No one. Colossians 1:16 says of Jesus Christ, “For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church:

who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Now, Jesus Christ is specifically stated to be the head of everyone. So, gentlemen, let me ask you a question. If you expect your wife to be in submission to you, should she not equally expect you to be in submission to Jesus Christ? If you are her head, Jesus Christ is your head. Now, the Bible does not tell us specifically a statement that says, Husband, submit yourselves to Jesus Christ. But the Bible does tell us in 1 Corinthians 11, verse 3, that the head of the man is Christ. And the Bible just told us in Colossians chapter 1 that he is the head of all things.

So, if you will look in your Bibles, please, to the book of Ephesians chapter 5, and let us begin reading there with verse 25. The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Why? "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." So ought men to love their wives as their own body. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.

I want you to hold Ephesians 5, because I am going to ask you some questions in just a moment. But before I do, turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, and look at verse 34. Look at what the Scripture says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches. For it is not permitted unto them to speak, but their commandment to be under obedience is also set the law." That is the Old Testament. "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

So, gentlemen, listen up. If you are to love your wife the way Jesus Christ loved the church, do you know how Jesus Christ loved the church? It was a special love, that is for sure. It was a sacrificial love. It was an exclusive love. He loved his church; he did not love a harlot. He loved his church. God expects you, gentlemen, to love your wives specially.

Sacrificially and exclusively. Based upon 1 Corinthians, chapter 14, the Bible says that if the woman wants to know anything, let her ask her husband at home. So my question is this: Has your wife become more knowledgeable in the things of God and in the Word of God because she is married to you?

Let me tell you something, man. When I am involved in a question-and-answer session, I jokingly tell people up front, “I can answer any question that you ask, as long as you understand that ‘I don’t know’ is the answer.” But when it comes to your wife asking you a question, it is your duty, obligation, and responsibility to find that answer for her. That is what the Bible says: If she wants to know anything, let her ask her husband.

You may not have a Ph.D. in theology, but that does not matter. You know how to do research. You know how to read your Bible, ask your pastor, and ask an elder. You know that you are responsible to answer your wife. When you don't have a biblical relationship. In positions. It hinders your prayers. That is what he said in 1 Peter 3:7.

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” When God says, “giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel,” that does not mean that you are the strong one. No, you are weak as well; she is just weaker. But God says that when you do not have this proper relationship, it hinders your prayer.

God has sovereignly designed the role of the husband and the role of the wife. The husband is to be a picture of Jesus Christ, and the wife, in her submission to her husband, is to be a picture of the church’s submission to Jesus Christ. That is simple. But here is what we do not understand: When these roles are reversed, confused, or conflated, instead of having life in the home, you end up having death in the home, because you have gotten out of God’s orderly way. Go back in your Bibles with me, please, to Deuteronomy chapter 30. Look at verse 19, and we will read verse 20. Look what God says.

Consequences of Rejecting God's Order

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursings. Therefore, choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, that thou mayest obey his voice, that thou mayest cleave unto him, for he is thy life and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land where the Lord swears unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. He said, “Choose life rather than death.”

A life-giving home is a life where everyone in the home prizes life, loves life, and wants life. It is a home where the husband and wife are living in obedience to the role that God has sovereignly ordained for each one of them. Therefore, their children are seeing this loving relationship. Let me tell you something: a loving husband and a submissive wife will produce children that know their proper roles as well. I know families that have grown children, with some still growing toward maturity. Those children are the most loving, kind, and helpful. You know why they are like that? Because your parents are like that. Where in the world do you think your children learn the most? From you.

Let me tell you something: your children know when you are a hypocrite and when you are not. If I stood up here tonight and said, “I am going to be teaching from, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’” and every one of you thought, or thought you knew, that Brother Weaver had had five affairs, would you listen to me teach on “Thou shalt not commit adultery”? I have not had five affairs, but would you listen to me?

I do not care what you teach your children. I do not care how correct it is biblically or doctrinally. If they see you not living it, they know what is reality.

If you look in your Bibles at 1 Timothy, chapter five, verse four, the Word of God says this: “But if any wedda have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and requite their parents: for this is good and acceptable for God.” Let them learn first to show godliness at home and requite their parents. What does the word “requite” mean?

It means to pay back. In other words, children who have been taught biblical role models will always pay back their parents by acting biblically and godly as well. But this verse also means that children are to help not only their immediate family, but their extended family as well. If you have aunts and uncles who need help, help them as well.

Where do you learn to do that? From your home. I had an uncle whose wife died. My wife and I took care of him for several years, until my daughter, her husband, and her family moved him to their place. Then they took care of him until he died. I took care of my mother after my father died, and I took care of my mother-in-law after my father-in-law died. Where do children learn this? From their parents.

Headship requires responsibility, duty, obligation, and work. So, gentlemen, here is my question: Who is responsible for the education of your children? Not the state. Not the government. Not wicked, unsaved men and women. According to the Word of God, it is the father, the head of the home. That does not mean that the mother cannot help, but it does mean the father has a responsibility to make sure that education is biblical and right, and done in a manner that honors God. That is why God said in Deuteronomy chapter four, those things which I command thee this day, you do them, and your children and your children's children.

Everybody in this room knows Ephesians 6 and verse 4: “And ye fathers, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Who is to bring them up? The fathers. It is the father's responsibility to make sure that the children are educated, not just doctrinally, but ethically, morally, and practically. Where are they going to learn this? By watching Mama and Daddy.

One of the saddest verses in the Bible is Zechariah 1:4: “Be ye not as your fathers. Unto whom the former prophets had cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye now from your evil ways and from your evil doings. But they did not hear nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.” Be not as your fathers. Do not live like your fathers lived. Could God ever say that to your family, to your

children: “Don't live like Mom and Dad lived”? God has ordained a role for the husband and a role for the wife.

Applications and Exhortations

This is absolutely basic and fundamental. Gentlemen, if you want a submissive, obedient wife, you need to be a loving, obedient husband to Jesus Christ and love her the way Christ commanded you to love her. Think about this carefully. If you will not obey God in what is most basic and fundamental, which I would call the least, whatever makes you think you will obey God in that which is great and difficult? If you cannot be faithful in that which is least, you will not be faithful in that which is much. Women, if you are not willing to submit to your husbands, and husbands, if you are not willing to submit to Jesus Christ, what makes you think your children ought to submit to you?

Unhappily, our children turn out to be just like us. If we want obedient children, loving, kind, and gracious children, we must be those kinds of parents to them. That does not mean no discipline. But you cannot expect your children to be in submission to you if you are not in submission to God. You do reap what you sow.

Young people, listen to me. Young ladies, listen: you should never marry a man to whom you cannot submit. You should never marry a man who will not take the responsibility to be your head and your protector. I have taught many people handgun, rifle, and shotgun. One of the best students I ever had was a beautiful young woman. She could outshoot most men almost with her eyes closed. I could tell you things about her shooting that would astound you. One day she said, “Pastor, I am just not going to marry a man that I have to protect.” She could have done it, but he is supposed to protect her.

Young men, you have no right to marry a young woman, regardless of how beautiful or gorgeous she is, if she is unwilling to submit. The truth is this: we have been talking about power, jurisdiction, authority, and God-ordained roles. Understand this important principle: jurisdiction, authority, power.

Power does not exist in a vacuum. God has ordained the husband to be the head of the home. If the husband is unbiblical, rebellious, defiant, and unwilling to assume responsibility for headship, power, jurisdiction, and authority shift to the wife, and you end up with a matriarchal society. If Mama says, "I'm not going to do it; he's not doing it. I'm not going to be the head of this house or have the authority," then guess what, Mama? If you don't do it, your children will. They'll run the home. And if the children won't run the home, the state will. Power does not exist in a vacuum. If we want our country back and our next generation saved, it will have to be through the family.

Now, Brother Tim said treason is usually against the family. But treason is not just against the family; it is against God. When you refuse the biblical roles that God has ordained for you, it is not just treason against your family; it is treason against God. You are denying His sovereign authority. God says, "This is the role that I have ordained for the man, for the woman": "The head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God."

If we want our country back, our families back, and our next generation back, we must create homes where life is prized and sought, and the blessings of God abound. Children can look at mama and daddy and say, "That's my man. That's my mother." What a blessing when a child wants to be like daddy and wants to be like mama. But when God has to say, "Be not as your fathers," what a blow. God, give us homes in which life is prized—homes, Lord, built upon this basic, fundamental, absolutely necessary principle: wives being in submission to their husbands, and husbands being in submission to Jesus Christ; husbands loving their wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it; and the wife seeing that she reverence the husband.

Lord, give us this relationship based upon Your Word, Your grace, and Your mercy. Father, we give Thee the praise, honor, and glory. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 20

Bushwacker Johnston

January 27, 2012

Introduction: A Time to Fight

Ecclesiastes chapter 3, beginning with verse 1: “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.”

Scripture tells us there is indeed a time to fight. It is spoken of in verse 8, where it is called a time of war. Looking back at verse 3, He begins by saying there is a time to kill. When you think about fighting, war, and killing, it is absolutely repulsive and unthinkable to those of us who do not harbor any inclination toward those acts. Yet we have to understand that there are times when it becomes

absolutely necessary. Scripture begins in verse 1 by saying, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.” Just as there are times of planting and times of harvesting, a time of weeping and a time of dancing, and a time of laughing, there is also a time of fighting, a time of war, and death.

A nonviolent man may be driven to violence, and the man who has never had an inkling or any desire to hurt anyone may be driven to fight and, yes, to kill in defense of his life, his family, and his home. One of the most frequently asked questions I get as I travel around, in light of everything that is happening, is this: “Where do I draw the line? Where do I draw my line in the sand and say, No more?”

Who Was Bushwhacker Johnston?

The line is drawn at different points for different individuals. None of us are made alike. None of us think exactly alike, or at least not alike in every detail, nor do we all have the same breaking point. Some can take more than others. Some want to hold back as long as they can, while others are ready to fight at the drop of a hat, and are willing to drop the hat themselves. Bushwhacker Johnston was a preacher who was driven to fight. Like many in his day, he was certainly not left a choice. It was either fight or die.

The term "bushwhacker" was normally applied to any Confederate soldier who operated as a partisan ranger, especially those who operated behind enemy lines or in territory claimed by the enemy. It was usually applied to small units that, of necessity, had to lay traps, use snares, and employ tricks against the enemy because the enemy vastly outnumbered them. Generally speaking, the term was applied to any rebel, any Confederate, found behind enemy lines. You will find it used against all the Confederates in Missouri, especially Quantrill and his band.

Bushwhacker Johnston was actually Pastor Milus E. Johnston, a Methodist preacher from Alabama. His father-in-law, the Reverend John Hicks Hammer, was also a Methodist preacher. After the war, his son, Melville Burr Johnston, also became a Methodist preacher. We are talking, then, about a family basically of preachers.

During 1860 and 1861, Pastor Johnston was on the Madison Circuit in North Alabama and, to use his own words, was "minding his own business, and his business was preaching the gospel." What many people do not understand is that in North Alabama, and especially in certain parts of Tennessee, the Federals, the Union, the Yanks, whatever you want to call them, had gained control of that territory. They were arresting and harassing a number of citizens.

Johnston's Path to War

Pastor Johnston appealed to the Federals in control of North Alabama that they might leave him alone, so that he could go about his business of preaching the gospel. Instead of listening to his appeal, they arrested him and harassed him and his family. According to Johnston's own words, he preached just as earnestly for the salvation of souls and pled just as earnestly for the preservation of the Union. In other words, here was a man who really wanted to be left alone.

He did not want the war or a divided country. He said, "I pray just as fervently for the salvation of souls as for the preservation of the Union." But after he had been arrested and so grievously treated, and his family so wickedly treated, he said that the Yankee colonel who arrested him had rubbed a few drops of secession blood into his constitution.

In that part of the country, Yankee soldiers were not only stealing everything imaginable, but burning homes, looting, raping, destroying, and murdering innocent men and women. On one occasion, Pastor Johnston was in town and said something to one of the Union soldiers. The soldier replied, "Well, every dog has his day." Pastor Johnston answered, "I believe there are more dogs around here than there are days."

After he was constantly harassed, he straightened himself up, looked northward, and said, "Boys, I've come to the conclusion that God never yet made a man to be slobbered on always by dogs. Hence, I'm going to give those fellows a turn the best I can get into the hopper."

Johnston immediately joined the Confederate Army, was commissioned as an officer, and was to raise troops and operate behind enemy lines. Johnston fought behind enemy lines throughout the entire war. His home, his life, and his ministry were behind enemy lines. He was not going to abandon his family, his country, or his ministry because of the Yankees. The Yankees eagerly sought him, and numerous companies were sent to capture or kill him. Yet none succeeded. Neither he nor his unit was ever captured during the war.

Johnston's Tactics and Philosophy

Thousands sought him and his men. How did they escape? Those men were born and raised in that country. They had intimate knowledge of it, and, according to Johnston's own words, they very seldom slept under a roof. They were usually out in the boondocks.

Johnston had only a few men under his command, usually as few as 35 to 85. There were other partisan units operating in the area as well, so that if a larger number of troops were needed, they could join together. During his first battle, Major Johnston had only 11 men. Four of those men could not even get to their weapons, which meant he had seven men, and those seven men successfully fought off 85 to 100 Yankees. Johnston called it the Battle of the Corn Cribs because they happened to be in corn cribs getting corn for their horses when the federal troops came upon them.

Johnston and his men had a motto: "For home and country." They determined that they would fight and die, if necessary, for their homes and their country. Their home, of course, was Alabama and the Southland. Bushwhacker Johnston had told his men a simple philosophy of fighting, and I would suggest this philosophy to each of you as well: They had to either fight it out, trick them out, run out, or die out.

If they could fight it out with the Yankees, they would do so. If they were outnumbered, they would try to trick them. If they could not succeed in that, they would try to outrun them. If they could not outrun them, they would die fighting. On several occasions, Johnston and his men were outnumbered from 15 to 20 to 1. At

those times, Johnston used this terminology: "Occasionally, we had to lead the Yanks." That meant they were in the front and the Federals were doing the pursuing.

Although there were mighty serious battles, it was not always serious. At times those men had to sit around in camp and became extremely bored. They wanted some entertainment, and some of Johnston's men would do this.

They would go into the woods, get grapevines, bind and wrap them together, and string them across the road just about rider high. They made them tight and taut, then waited until dusk, or just a little after dawn, when it was very difficult to see. When they saw some Yankees coming, they would shoot their pistols over their heads, turn, and run as though they did not want to fight. The Yankees would chase them, and just as they hit the grapevines, all of them would be swept off their horses. Johnston's men would turn around, laugh, and ride off. They did not want to kill them; they were just having fun.

It was not always entertainment, either. Johnston had great abilities and skills, and he was determined to lead his men in fighting. Consequently, dire death threats were issued against this preacher and his men. A new Yankee colonel came into town and, according to what Johnston heard, ordered that no quarter was to be shown to either Johnston or his men. If captured, they were to be shot or hanged immediately.

Johnston and his men were Confederate soldiers, real soldiers, and therefore entitled to be treated as prisoners of war if and when captured. When Major Johnston heard that the Yankee colonel had ordered them to be shot down like dogs or hanged, he immediately wrote to him: "Sir, we learned that you have orders from headquarters, and those orders have been read in dress parade that you should give our boys no quarter, but shoot or hang every prisoner. Now, sir, we have always treated prisoners as human beings, showing them special kindness, which course we wish to continue. Please be kind enough to let us know whether you have received such orders or not."

The Battle of Yellowbank and Biblical Surrender Offer

Plain and simple. The answer came back: "The 13th asked for no quarter, nor does it give any." Shortly thereafter, Company B was sent out to capture the hateful band of bushwhackers. On the way, they stopped at the house of Captain Thomas Owens, who was in the Confederate Army and therefore not home. Mrs. Owens and the children were there, but no men were. The Federals gave Mrs. Owens an extreme and severe tongue-lashing, issued all kinds of threats against her and the children, and demanded to know where Bushwhacker Johnston was.

She told them that she had no idea. And she did not really know; they did not believe her, but they could not get any information out of her. Finally, the officer in charge said, “We shall be back within two hours and show you old Johnston’s bald head.” Sure enough, within sixty minutes, they had an introduction to Bushwhacker Johnston. The meeting took place at what is known as the Battle of Yellowbank.

Yellow Bank was a small creek winding its way through the low grounds of the Vina Valley. Previously, a hurricane or a tornado had come along and blown down a huge section of great logs and great trees there. Johnston knew that the Yanks were coming, and so he positioned his men not only where he might meet them, but where he might also outflank them and be in their rear at the same time. In reality, it was an excellent trap. When the Federals got within that trap, this would be hilarious if it were not true. Major Johnston shouted for the Yanks to halt and surrender.

Since Major Johnston was also a pastor, of course, he knew the Word of God. In every instance, before he started a fight, he always gave his enemy an opportunity to surrender. Why would he do that? Deuteronomy chapter 20 tells us what God commanded the Israelites as they went out to battle. Here is what God told the Israelites in Deuteronomy chapter 20, verse 10: “When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace to it.”

He wasn't fighting a city, but it is still the same principle: “When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if they make thee an answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.” If they would make peace, they became tributaries. “And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword.” God said that an offer of peace could be made. If they surrendered, fine; they became tributaries. If they would not surrender, then God literally said to kill all the men.

It was Major Johnston's standard operating procedure that, whenever he met those Yankees, he would give them the opportunity to surrender and save the effusion of blood. In this instance, he called upon them to halt and surrender. They did not. They opened fire, and Major Johnston and his men poured an extremely heavy fire not only into their front, but also into their rear and flank. There was only one way for them to escape the deadly battle, and many took it—those who could. Many had already been killed, hurt, or wounded.

During the melee, one horse reared up with its rider. Both horse and rider were wounded. Instead of taking the avenue of escape, however, the horse tried to run straight toward Major Johnston and his men, who were behind huge fallen trees. The horse tried to jump over the trees, but, being wounded, could not make the jump. It fell, and the rider was thrown twenty feet into the air before he ever hit the ground.

Major Johnston assumed the man was killed. But when he checked on him, he found that he was not killed and was not even hurt as badly as he had supposed. While his men gathered up the Federals' equipment that they had thrown down and lost, the remainder made it back to Huntsville. By the way, this was Company B. It was Company A that Johnston met at the Battle of the Corn Cribs, when seven men defeated between eighty-five and one hundred Federal soldiers. When Company B came limping

back, Company A began to tease and ridicule them, saying, "Oh yeah, oh yeah, we told you old Johnston would fight."

Johnston took one Yank who had been thrown from his horse, poured water on him, and revived him. When the man came to and was able to travel, Major Johnston sent him back to his command in Huntsville. He said, "I want you to give a message to your masters. You tell them to go back to their masters at the stockade and tell them that old Johnston's hand has been heavy upon them for certain. And he says that if you take the life of one of his men after they have surrendered, the lives of ten of your men will pay the forfeit." The Yankee replied that he was afraid he would be killed before he got back to Huntsville.

Defiance and Mercy

Major Johnston said, "You go ahead and leave. I can assure you that not a hair of your head will be touched." Sure enough, the man got successfully back to Huntsville and gave that fateful report to his commanding officer. Johnston also says, "We do not know if this was the same Yank who gave that fateful report to his masters or not, but one of them said that Major Johnston always prays over his wounded enemies before he sends them back. He said he prays, 'Good Lord, we didn't mean to hurt this man. Enable my boys to take better aim next time so that they may kill and not cripple.'" Interestingly enough, that was the report one of the Yanks gave concerning Bushwhacker Johnston.

The Federals were exceedingly angry with Johnston and his men. Consequently, they were determined to drive them out of the country, even if they had to destroy the whole country. They burned houses, arrested citizens, and court-martialed and hanged a number of them. Finally, they drew up a petition asking Johnston and his men to cross the river—that is, to get out of Alabama, go into Tennessee, and leave them alone—and forced the citizens to sign it.

Dr. Isaac Sullivan refused to sign the petition. He went to Johnston and his men, told them about it, and said that he had refused to sign. The officer in charge of Johnston's men told the doctor, "Doctor, you go back and sign the petition, for it will do us

no harm, and perhaps it will make fair weather for you. By refusing to sign, you lay yourself liable to be arrested, put in prison, and maybe your life taken." The petition was sent out there.

These citizens had asked Johnston to leave, and Johnston replied to the Federal soldiers: "Gentlemen, we are much obliged for your kind offer, but we've never failed to cross the river whenever we wish to, neither do we expect to fail when we desire to cross it again. This is our country, and here we expect to stay."

The Federals responded that if Bushwhacker Johnston and his men did not leave, they would burn ten square miles of Alabama. Johnston replied, "You've already been burning. You've burned dwellings, cribs, barns, churches, fences, and you may burn on. Yes, you may burn old terra firma until the bottom drops out and she caves in. Then, if it be possible, we will bring grains of sand one at a time from some other sphere and stick them together until we have a foundation to stand on and fight you again over the chasm. You had just as well understand once and for all, we are here to stay. This is our home."

Getting no word from them, Johnston and his men went about their business, and the Yanks went about theirs, which was burning houses and arresting citizens.

Major Johnston was not a bloodthirsty man. He was a great fighter and knew how to stack the odds in his favor, but he was not out for killing just to be killed. He laid a trap for a troop of Federal soldiers coming along a certain road. In fact, Major Johnston said it was a death trap, arranged so that no soldier would be able to escape. They could literally kill every Federal soldier who entered that section of the road. But just as they were about to spring the trap, Major Johnston noticed a number of private citizens riding with the Federal soldiers. Not wishing to harm innocent civilians, he allowed the civilians and the Federal soldiers to pass safely through the trap. No citizen and no Yankee soldier ever realized how close they had come to death. The fact that he did not want to harm innocent men allowed those Federal soldiers to go free.

Those Federals continued to loot houses and steal. In one instance, they were stealing meat from the smokehouse of an old

Primitive Baptist preacher. As the preacher saw all his meat stolen, he said in anguish and anger, "I wish the bushwhackers would get hold of you before you get back to camp."

The Yanks had not gone far from his house when five Confederate soldiers came upon them. The Federals were ordered to surrender, but they dropped the stolen meat and went for their weapons. Five Confederate soldiers defeated twenty-two Federal soldiers who had been plundering, looting, and stealing. They killed two of the Yanks outright. Thankfully, one of those killed was the man who had heard the old preacher speak. Had he lived and repeated it, the preacher's life would have been in danger.

Peaceable men could be driven to war. Everything about war is unpleasant, the shedding of blood is horrible, and sometimes war is indeed forced upon an individual. Most people have a romantic idea about war: "Well, I'm going to kill the enemy." But they never stop and think about the enemy trying to kill them.

I had a good friend, not only a friend but a relative, who was a machine gunner on a helicopter in Vietnam. He was eager to get over there, and, after he was wounded, just as eager to get back home. He told me, "You know what I found out? Those people shoot back. They were trying to kill me. I am so thankful that I got wounded because had I not been wounded, I would have been killed." You have to understand this.

The Suffering of Johnston's Family

It does not matter concerning the dangers. There are times when individuals are forced into fighting. Major Johnston had three homes burned down by federal troops. It is bad enough to lose one's home and possessions, but it is even worse when one's wife and children are maliciously and wickedly treated. Men can be driven to the point of fighting, but women may also be driven to that point equally as well as men.

Pastor Johnston's wife, Mary Elizabeth Johnston, was brought up in a Christian home. Her father, John Hicks Hammer, was not only a pastor; he was also a Methodist minister. Mrs. Johnston was a kind and gracious woman who tried to model her life after the

Proverbs 31 woman. She was of medium height, weighed about 130 pounds, and had dark eyes, black hair, rosy cheeks—a picture of health and happiness.

When the Federals came the second time to burn the house down, Mrs. Johnston was in the loom house while her child slept on the trundle bed. A mattress lay on the rafters above it. One Yankee soldier came in, took a new broom, set it on fire, and then set fire to the mattress in an attempt to burn the house down. Mrs. Johnston saw the fire falling upon her sleeping baby. She pushed the federal soldier away, snatched the mattress down, and knocked out the fire. While she was doing this, the soldier hit her over the head with the burning broom, singeing her hair, burning numerous holes in her dress, and still trying to set the house on fire to destroy her and the baby. Mrs. Johnston reached back, picked up a tea kettle, and swung at the Yankee soldier. The only reason she missed him was that the handle came off and her aim was off.

When she missed him with the teapot, she picked up the fire poker and began to beat him over the head, driving him out of the house. When the other federal soldiers saw how she was defending her house, they at least gave her time to get her baby and furniture out until they set the house on fire and burned it to the ground. The family then moved three-quarters of a mile down the road into other houses owned by her father.

You and I cannot comprehend the hatred and animosity that existed between those federal soldiers and Southerners, especially against Southerners who not only fought them, but some of whom had done absolutely nothing. You would think that after burning two homes to the ground, they would say, "We've tormented the Johnston family enough; let's leave them alone."

But no, they came after them a third time. There was no one there except a few women and children, and they burned the house down again. The ladies had only a short time to salvage a few pieces of furniture, then had to stand helplessly by in tears in the cold winter of North Alabama as everything they had was burned to the ground.

To add insult to injury, Mrs. Johnston was arrested by Lieutenant Colonel B.B. Her six-month-old baby was ripped from her arms, and she was forced to leave the child with others who had been burned out. On top of that, she was forced to ride horseback twenty-three miles through the roughest winter weather in northern Alabama. She was made a prisoner and held in Huntsville, Alabama. During this time, Major Johnston was out fighting. In one instance, he passed within six miles of his imprisoned wife without knowing anything about her capture. He said—and these are his words—that had he known what had happened to his wife, there would have been weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. When he discovered what had happened to his wife, he said he had never been so sorely tempted in his entire life.

Johnston's Struggle with Vengeance

The temptation was to cherish vengeance against everything and everyone who wore a blue uniform. Further, he said, he had to summon to their aid all the human kindness in their nature, reach out for the examples of great and good men before them, and gather every particular of grace from every nook and corner of their souls.

But when they combined all these things, they found that the scales did not balance. Hence, they threw themselves and everything else down at the foot of the cross, asking God to help them for the sake of the blood of Jesus Christ. “Thank God,” he said, “we gained the victory at last, but the conflict was awful.”

Stop and think about that. He said, “The temptation was to kill anything and everything in blue.” But not anything and everything in blue had done the wickedness—only certain individuals.

Major Johnston and his men immediately devised a plan to rescue his wife. They knew every nook and cranny in Huntsville, Alabama, and were determined to rescue her or die trying. Unbeknown to Major Johnston, one of his captains, Captain Robert Welch, had been sent to convey thirty-five Yankee prisoners deeper into Dixie so they could be turned over to the authorities. When he heard of Mrs. Johnston’s arrest, he

immediately sent a dispatch to the commander at Huntsville: “I have thirty-five prisoners. And if you do not set Mrs. Johnston at liberty at once, the last one of them will look up a tree.” In plain, simple language, “I’ll hang every one of them. You better release Mrs. Johnston.”

Whether it was the dispatch God used or simply an act of His overruling providence, I do not know. But the Provost Marshal set Mrs. Johnston free and sent a good doctor, Dr. Wright, to see her home safely. Before they could leave Huntsville, they passed Lieutenant Colonel McDonald, who asked where they were going. They showed him the passes. He snatched them away and said, “Mrs. Johnston is not a prisoner of the government, but she’s my prisoner. And these passes are no good.” Dr. Wright and Mrs. Johnston returned to the provost marshal, who issued new passes.

He said to them, “Now go on. If that fellow interrupts you again, report him to me, and I will teach him a lesson he will soon not forget.” Mrs. Johnston reached home safely.

Beside that incident, one of the saddest events Major Johnston had to deal with was the murder of young Patrick Davis. Davis was only seventeen years of age and the sole support of his widowed mother and three sisters. Mrs. Davis had six sons; five of them were in the war, and the youngest, Patrick, was at home taking care of his mother.

The Murder of Patrick Davis

He had worked hard all week, so he took his mule down to the river to wash the mule and bathe himself. While he was there, federal soldiers captured him and took him to Colonel Edward Anderson. Anderson commanded at Brownsboro and was having innocent citizens shot and hanged. The seventeen-year-old boy was accused of being a bushwhacker and a spy. He was neither.

He was asked to take a loyalty oath, which he refused. Then he was asked, if he had to join an army, which army he would join. He replied that he could not join either army. He had his mother and sisters to care for, had family responsibilities, and was unable to join any army because of them. Since his sympathies lay with the

South, however, if he had to make a choice, he would probably join the Confederate Army.

Colonel Anderson responded, “I’ll fix you. You shall not go into either.” He gave the young boy a pass to return home, then, after the boy left town, sent out a squad of men to kill him. They caught up with Patrick, tied his body to a tree, riddled him with bullets, and dumped his body into a sinkhole. When he did not return, his mother and neighbors searched for him. Thankfully, neighbors discovered the body. He had been shot fourteen times. His body was so mangled that they decided it would be best if his mother did not see her son.

She was overcome with grief, so grief-stricken that she had to be helped home and could not function on her own. Colonel Anderson was such a wicked man and tyrant that many people feared to do anything without his permission. The man who made the casket was even afraid to make one without a permit from Colonel Anderson.

Many people may have feared Colonel Anderson, but Mrs. Davis did not. After regaining her composure, she went to confront him concerning the murder of her son. When she arrived, Colonel Anderson refused her admittance, saying that he did not have time to see her. She forced her way into his presence and told him that he had murdered an innocent man, broken a mother's heart, and that she would have her revenge. She stormed out, went to the other commanding officers, and told them that if they did not bring Lieutenant Colonel Anderson to justice, she herself would ride to find the rebel cavalry and bring them there to rectify the situation.

Due to her efforts, Colonel Anderson was finally arrested and imprisoned, but he was given only five years for young Davis' murder. Thus, he escaped punishment for all the other murders he had perpetrated. Interestingly, Major Johnston and his men came upon Mrs. Davis' home and saw a horse tied outside with U.S. stamped upon him. They surrounded the house. When Major Johnston entered, he discovered that the federal officer there was actually a young lieutenant gathering evidence against Colonel Anderson. Major Johnston told him, "Sir, if we can help you in any

way, we'll be delighted to. You may be assured that no harm will come to you."

Surrender and Post-War Grace

A few months after the war, Major Johnston held a memorial service for young Patrick Davis. Federal soldiers came to the service. When they entered the church, Major Johnston said, "Come in friends, stack your arms in the corner over there. When I was in the army, I fought you with all my might, but now I'm in the pulpit and I will preach to you with all my ability." After the service, a number of the soldiers came and shook hands with Major Johnston.

Major Johnston was never captured, nor was his unit. When the war ended, Major Johnston wanted to surrender with his men, but they were not going to surrender on the terms the enemy sometimes offered. He wrote General Granger: "General, dear sir, we've concluded to surrender our command providing you will give us a living chance.

"But we wish it distinctly understood that after we surrender, we are not to be marched through the streets of Huntsville to be tantalized like so many monkeys, or court-martialed, shot, or hung like so many dogs. In other words, if we're forced to sell out, we intend to sell out at the very highest price. We repeat it, give us a living chance, and we'll surrender all the men we can get to come in, respectfully, Major M.E. Johnston."

General Granger replied, "Major Johnston, dear sir, I will grant you with pleasure the same terms that were granted to General Lee and General Johnston, respectfully, Granger." When they decided to surrender under these terms, Colonel Given was appointed to accept the surrender. Major Johnston said, "When we heard them coming, we had a white rag flying high in the air, and we beheld a Union flag with a white flag waving close by its side, advancing to meet us."

Colonel Given and our appointed officer met first. Afterward, the notorious bushwhacker, Major Johnston, was introduced to the colonel. After the formal salutations, Major Johnston said to

Colonel Gibbon, "Colonel, permit me to say that you're the first federal officer or private whom I have met since the war began who treated me as if I had been anything above a four-footed animal." The colonel replied, "I'm sorry to hear that, Major." Johnston answered, "I know that it's plain language, Colonel, but it's nevertheless the unvarnished truth."

In a few minutes, Colonel Horner came up, a wicked, wicked man. He had fallen behind with his regiment behind Colonel Gibbon. As soon as Major Johnston saw Major Horner, he sent to Colonel Gibbon, "If we had met that man ten minutes before we met you, there would have been a fight, for we never have intended to surrender to that man." Before he got through with that interview, he found that Colonel Gibbon was not burdened with respect for Colonel Horner either.

The agreement was that they were to be paroled on the spot and set at liberty. But a heavy rain came. Colonel Gibbon proposed that they march into town where they could find shelter, but Major Johnston and his men objected. Colonel Gibbon continued to urge them until a known Southerner, Uncle Ben Jolly, stood up with his strong, commanding voice and said, “Major, move into town with your men. It is true we cannot treat you as well as we would like to, but I have plenty of meat and bread and two large rooms covered with carpets where your men can lie crossed and piled.”

“Besides,” he said, “I’m married to the best rebel gal in all America.” Under continued pressure, Major Johnston said, “We yielded.” Colonel Gibbon had been appointed to receive their surrender, and before doing so he asked some pointed questions. First, he asked one of the officers, “Are not Johnston’s men poor men?” The answer was, “They are.” Second, he asked, “Will they not need their horses in order to make a crop?” The answer was, “They will.”

“Well,” said Colonel Given, “Major, tell your men to dismount and come into town on foot, for if I do not see their horses, I cannot report them.” Major Johnston said this sounded strange from a federal soldier. But when Ben Jolly finished, Colonel Gibbon spoke a second time. Standing in front of his officers, he called out, “Major, it is true that your men have laid down their

arms, but let them shoulder them again and march right into town. And if I had my way, I would allow your men to keep their arms and to kill some of those rascals who might give you trouble."

Major Johnston could not believe his ears. Finally, because of the rain, they got into town. There were two roads, a right-hand road and a left-hand road. Colonel Horner and his men took the right-hand road, while Colonel Gibbon took the left-hand road toward the arsenal. When Colonel Horner learned that Colonel Gibbon had taken the left-hand road and had not followed him, he sent word: "Tell Colonel Gibbon to take the right-hand road and come where I am." When Colonel Gibbon received the message, his eyes flashed, and he sent word by the messenger, "You tell Colonel Horner that I'm in command here, and he'd best do well to mind his own business."

Shortly they were at the arsenal, handing over their weapons. A number of the citizens and soldiers gathered around, and finally someone said, "Well, those fellows did more execution than any set of men I've ever heard of to use such poke stalks for guns." In other words, they could not believe how well Johnston and his men fought when they saw the sorry weapons they had. Major Johnston said, "Had they known the truth, we still had our weapons. For we took the best of our weapons and hid them in a cave before we surrendered, and we only surrendered broken and outdated weapons." So Colonel Gibbon was very kind and gracious to Major Johnston and his men.

At his headquarters, he not only gave them a firm handshake and a smile, but immediately wrote their paroles. As he wrote them, one of his aides came running in and said, "Colonel, there's a United States horse out here." Raising his head, Colonel Gibbon replied, "You may go away from here, sir. There may be a United States horse out there, but I do not see him." When the United States government captured any horse, they branded him.

Whether the horse was theirs or not did not matter. They put their brand on him and claimed him as government property. A short while later, the same aide said, "Colonel, there are three or four United States horses out here." Colonel Gibbon said, "If I were to go out there, sir, perhaps I might see a half a dozen United

States horses, but I do not see them, sir. Sir, you go away from here and stay when you're gone." Colonel Gibbon was providing good mounts for Major Johnston and his officers. He then treated them very decently.

When they left, he shook their hands and gave them a hearty invitation to come back and visit him anytime they needed help. They simply had to ask him. Major Johnston wrote his autobiography and account of the war some years after the war was over. Thirty-six years after the war, he concluded with these words:

“It is true that as a consequence of the war, bitter feelings were stirred up in the minds and hearts of opposing parties. We were willing to forgive and to ask forgiveness. And after more than 36 years have passed, we have not seen fit to change our mind.”

“We believe that the judge of all the earth in dealing with both sides will do right and we're willing to submit to his decision.” Major Johnston's attitude was the same as General Lee's: God is in control, and we must submit to Him.

Applications: God's Protection, Overcoming Bitterness, and Righteous Fighting

The sovereign God of heaven and earth does indeed know how to protect His people. Major Johnston and his men oftentimes fought the enemy when they were outnumbered, outgunned, and ill-equipped. Throughout the entire war, Major Johnston was not wounded, was not captured. Very few of his men.

God does indeed know how to deliver His people. “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust on the day of judgment to be punished.” God knows how to deliver the godly. He also knows how to hold the unjust to judgment. But God can, in His infinite grace, preserve and protect. I know I've told you this before, and times have changed.

Oh, how times have changed. But I remember back in the 60s, when I was at boot camp at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, they took us out at night with an 11-man squad for a night firing. They had two BARs, Browning Automatic Rifles, and the rest of the men

had M1s. Every fifth bullet was a tracer. For every red streak that you could see, there were four more that you could not see. When that 11-man squad laid down its field of fire, with the intersections crossed and crisscrossed, it looked like a solid sheet of red. I never will forget the thought that entered my mind: "Oh Lord, how can any man crawl through that? How can any man live through that?" And yet, countless men did.

Today, when you consider that a minigun, with one burst, can put a bullet in every square inch of a football field, let me tell you: I do not care what weapon the enemy has. You know what the Bible says in Isaiah 57? "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. This is the heritage of the saints of God." God knows how to protect His people, and He can do so in the direst of circumstances.

Here is a second application. It is noteworthy, and this came to light in Major Johnston's attitude again, that many who were so evilly treated, threatened, looted, robbed, and imprisoned could come out of that war without bitterness and resentment. Do you realize that only the child of God, who has the grace and mercy of God, can overcome bitterness and resentment? The Bible says in Ephesians 4 and verse 31, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you." God said, "Don't let that be in you." Hebrews 12 and verse 15 says, "Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up thereby trouble you and thereby many be defiled." Yet here were men who could come out of that war without bitterness or resentment and say, "We're willing to commit everything to the Judge of all the earth, who is going to do what's right. God is in control. He'll work it out."

The last application of this, folks—listen carefully—men, even Christian men, can be pushed too far. Once they reach that point and draw that line, they push back and fight back. They fight back in faith, with the blessing and power of God.

One thing the enemy has never counted on is this: when God's men are pushed to their fighting point, they always summon the sovereign God of heaven and earth to help them and fight in His power and might. You have heard the old adage that God and one

man make a majority. That's not true. God Himself is a majority. But one man can be used by God to defeat and overthrow the enemy. Bushwhacker Johnston was a man of faith and a great warrior.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I pray that You would help us draw these applications and lessons. May we remember that all history is Your history, Lord. History is nothing less than the providence of God, the eternal decree of God coming to pass in time. We are accountable to learn from it. Speak to our hearts. Teach us. Build us up in the most holy faith. Make us holy and godly men as we obey Thy Word and believe Thy truth. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask. Amen.

CHAPTER 21

The Communication of our Faith

February 15, 2012

Introduction and Reading of Philemon 1:1-6

Open your Bibles to the book of Philemon, one little book right before Hebrews. We are going to read six verses. Lord willing, I will come back next Sunday and finish the little book of Philemon—at least what I want to teach out of it. I certainly cannot cover these few verses in two messages.

By the way, as a side note, we have a road in Albany, Georgia, called Philemon Road. Philemon is from the Greek word philema, which literally means "a kiss." That is interesting; I guess that is why he is called "our dearly beloved" there in verse one. Notice, then, Philemon, chapter one, beginning with verse one.

Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ and Timothy, our brother, unto Philemon, our dearly beloved and fellow laborer, and to our beloved Apphia and Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints; that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

The Importance and Nature of Communicating Faith

There is so much in the book of Philemon, but today I want to deal mainly with this truth: the communication of our faith. I can begin by asking several questions. First of all, is your faith in Christ important? Is your faith in the Word of God important? If the answer is yes—and I assume that it is to both questions—would you like to communicate that faith to others? How in the world is faith communicated? How is it evidenced? How do others know that we are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Faith is indeed the gift of God, and we cannot save anyone, nor can we give our faith to anyone, literally speaking. At the same time, there is a blessedness and a greatness to our faith that we certainly wish to communicate to others. Paul said it plainly in Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Although we cannot give away our faith, there is indeed a communication of our faith.

John Gill said it succinctly: “The grace of faith itself cannot be communicated from one to another. A believing parent cannot communicate it to his children, nor a master to his servants, nor a minister to his hearers. But an account of it, of its actings and exercises, of the joy of it, and of the peace a soul is filled with through believing, may be given to the mutual comfort and edification of the saints. It may be shown forth to others by the fruits of it, that is the works of righteousness.” Gill was truthful: the grace itself cannot be communicated, but certainly its actings, fruits, and evidence can.

Paul's Greeting and the Household of Philemon

Paul begins this little epistle by writing to Philemon, to his family, and to his church. Evidently, Philemon was not only a godly man,

but had a godly wife as well. In verse 2 he says, “and to our beloved Apphia.” Undoubtedly, Apphia was Philemon’s wife; most commentators simply state that she was. She is referred to as our beloved Apphia, meaning that she was a fellow helper, not only to Paul, but especially to Philemon. Archippus is also mentioned. He may have been their son—notice the qualification, may; we do not know for sure whether he was their son—but we do know that Archippus was a fellow pastor. He is also referred to as a fellow soldier: “and to Archippus, our fellow soldier.” Paul always referred to those who worked with him as fellow soldiers.

Colossians chapter 4, verse 17, refers to Archippus and very obviously declares that he was indeed a pastor: “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.” So Archippus was indeed a minister.

Paul normally refers to those who worked with him as fellow soldiers. Why? Because the ministry is indeed a warfare.

That may shock you. Alice and I laugh because when I was a boy, I kind of wanted to be a preacher. But my motives were all wrong because, according to my perception, preachers only worked on Wednesday and Sunday, and then they could play the rest of the week. Boy, was I ever surprised. It just does not work like that. It is not only a work, but it is indeed a warfare as well.

So he calls them fellow soldiers. In fact, he told Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:3, “Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” In Philippians chapter 2 and verse 25, the Apostle Paul said this of Epaphroditus: “Yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you, Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, and your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.” Thus Epaphroditus, Timothy, and Archippus are all referred to as fellow soldiers. In verse 2, Paul also addresses the church that met in Philemon’s house: “unto our beloved Apphia, and to Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house.”

As you read through the New Testament, you discover that initially the church met in homes. In the larger cities, there were likely a number of homes in which the church met. But especially

during the first two centuries, the church was persecuted, and there was no such thing as church buildings. They met in the home, in the forests, or wherever they could meet without being interrupted by the government.

The book of Philemon is actually a personal letter. It was written to Philemon, and it is also the smallest epistle, or smallest book, that the Apostle Paul wrote. Yet it is interesting that Paul uses the same greeting in this brief, short letter to Philemon that he uses in all of the larger letters to the major churches. He says, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” If there is going to be any grace, if there is going to be any peace, it has to come to us from the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives the same exact greeting in the smallest epistle as he does in the largest epistle.

Paul's Prayer and the Emphasis on Love and Faith

Verse 4 deals with the beginning of Paul’s prayer for Philemon and the church that is in his house. He states, “I thank my God making mention of thee always in my prayers.” I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers. It was Paul’s purpose. It was Paul’s plan. And it was Paul’s habit always to make praying for individuals and churches by name. This was not an occasional practice or a general reference in prayer; Paul made mention of individuals and churches by name. He was deliberate about bringing them before God.

In Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 16, Paul says concerning the church there, “Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.” The Apostle Paul, then, was not only praying for individuals by name; he was also praying for churches by name as well. The interesting thing is that, no matter what happened to the Apostle Paul, nothing hindered his prayer life. The circumstances through which he passed did not stop him from constantly and continually praying.

Consider some of the things the Apostle Paul went through in 2 Corinthians chapter 11. When you see them, think how Paul constantly and continually prayed. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, beginning with verse 24, the Apostle Paul said these things.

Though he endured those experiences, his prayer life continued. The letter to Philemon therefore shows us not merely that Paul prayed, but that he prayed with thanksgiving, with specific people and churches in mind. As we make our way to verse 6, that will be the main verse with which we deal, but verse 4 gives us the beginning of this prayer and the pattern of Paul's faithful practice.

"Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered a shipwreck, a night and day I've been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness and watchings often, in hunger and thirst and fastings and cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of the churches."

When you stop and think about everything that the Apostle Paul went through, you may ask, How in the world could he have prayed incessantly and continually? On the other hand, if I were spending a night and day in the deep, I would be praying. If I were being beaten with rods or with a whip, I would be praying as well.

These things may have motivated him to pray, especially what he considered the care of the churches. It is our weakness and our sin that sometimes allow anything, and often everything, to interfere with our prayer. "I just don't feel like praying." Do you realize God has commanded you to pray whether you feel like it or not? "I'm just so busy." Do you realize God can get you unbusy? It is amazing how many excuses we make and how we allow anything and everything to interfere with our prayer life.

Go back to the book of Philemon and look at verse 4 again: "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers." The Apostle Paul prayed for pastors by name. How many pastors do you pray for by name on a daily basis? I hope that you pray for at least one. I hope that you pray for this one. Paul thanked God for Philemon. Look what he said in verse 5.

He said, “Hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints.” Paul is thanking God for Philemon, and he is thanking God because he continually hears of the love and faith which Philemon had toward the Lord Jesus Christ and toward all the saints.

Notice what Paul does in this verse: he places love first, although theologically faith comes first. He says, “hearing of thy love and thy faith.” Isn’t that interesting? He placed love first. John Trapp, the old Puritan, said this: “Faith is the mother grace. The womb wherein love and all the rest of that heavenly offspring are conceived.” Certainly, faith is indeed the mother of all grace.

But what the Apostle Paul emphasizes concerning the love that Philemon was exercising is found in 1 Timothy 1:5. He writes to Timothy, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned.” The end of the commandment literally is the charge that Paul gave Timothy: that he preach no other doctrine, that is, only the Word of God, and that he allow none of the doctrine to be preached otherwise. The end of the commandment—the end of preaching the Word of God—is love out of your heart. The end of the commandment is the end of the commandment of preaching the Word of God. If you want to know what comes first, you have to invert verse 5.

You have to turn it upside down, because he talks about the end. In verse 5, he says, “Now the end of the commandment is charity or love out of pure heart and of a good conscience and faith unfeigned.” What comes first is unfeigned, or unhypocritical, faith. Then you have a good conscience, and out of that faith and good conscience comes love.

Here is what the Apostle Paul is emphasizing as you look back to the little book of Philemon in verse 5: “Hearing of thy love and thy faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus,” and note, “and toward all the saints.” Faith always manifests itself in and through and toward Jesus Christ. Love always manifests itself toward the saints of God. If we truly and genuinely love the Lord, we obey Him. But in obeying Him, we minister to the saints of God.

Ministering to Christ Through the Saints

How in the world can you minister to Jesus Christ? What can you give Him? He has everything. He is God of gods and King of kings and Lord of lords. What can you do for Him? He is omnipotent. How do you minister to Christ?

Look at Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 10: “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister.” Isn’t that amazing? Here is how you minister to Christ; here is how you minister to God: in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister. In other words, our love toward God, our love toward our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is manifested in the fact that we minister to each other.

Do you remember, without turning there, in Matthew chapter 25, our Lord said, “I was in prison and you visited me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was hungered and you fed me.” And the saints said, “Lord, when did we do those things to you? We don’t ever remember seeing you in prison or feeding you or giving you water.” And what did our Lord say?

“Inasmuch as you've done it to the least of these, my brethren, you've done it unto me.” Then he looked to the ones on the left and said, “I was in prison and you visited me not. I was hungered and you fed me not. I was thirsty and you gave me not.” They replied, “Lord, we would have certainly given it to you.” He said, “Inasmuch as you did it not to the least of these, my brethren, you did it not unto me.”

Now go back to Philemon and look at verse 5. This is a very important truth and a very important verse. He says, “Hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus Christ and toward my congregation.” Is that what it says? No: “Toward all saints.” The saints cannot be limited simply to Philemon's congregation.

Do you realize that most preachers and most Christians have what is known as tunnel vision? We're looking right here. We see us four and no more. We see me and mine. Here's the way most preachers go, and I'm telling you the truth: If it will not benefit me,

if it will not benefit my ministry, if it will not benefit my congregation, I'm not interested in participating. What about all the other saints? That is true of Christians as well. We have to understand that there are other saints outside of our little ministry. There are other sheep that our Lord has that we don't necessarily run into all the time. If those saints are in need, then we are responsible before God to minister to them regardless of their locale, regardless of their help, or regardless of their needs.

As the pastor of this congregation, I try to help individuals who are not in our congregation, but who are saints with needs wherever they are. Galatians 6:10 says, “And as we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are the household of faith.” We have an obligation to do good unto all men, but we have a special obligation to the household of faith.

There are times that I pass people on the interstate on the other side. There is no way in the world I can stop the traffic behind me, and I could not get over because of the barriers anyhow. But I see someone over there with a flat tire or engine problems. You know what I do? I pray. I say, "Lord, please help him, especially if he is one of yours. Please send him the help that he needs." As we have opportunity, if I have opportunity to help, I will. But we have a special obligation to help the household of faith.

Philemon exercised a ministry toward all the saints. The Apostle Paul wrote, "For we have great joy and consolation in thy love because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." Philemon did everything he could to take care of the saints in any way that he could.

Not all of us have the same talents, abilities, or resources. I am thankful for the way that each of us ministers to one another in our own different ways. I have been helped immensely by some of you, and I hope you have been helped immensely by me. But note what he said: "the bowels of the saints have been refreshed by thee, brother."

A closer view of verses 5, 6, and 7 teaches us that Philemon not only had a well-rounded view of the ministry; he also had a biblical view of the ministry. Notice what he said in verse 5: "hearing of thy

love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints." Paul mentions, first, faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and secondly, love toward all the saints. The Ten Commandments are on two tablets: one speaks of our duty and obligation to God, and the other speaks of our duty and obligation to man. These two tablets sum up our whole duty—one to God and one to man—and this is exactly what the Apostle Paul is doing in verse 5.

He's giving us a summation. Our duty toward the Lord Jesus is faith, and toward each other, love. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 12 and verse 13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep His commandments. This is the whole duty of man." Fear God and keep His commandments. There is a relationship toward God, a duty toward Him, and a duty toward man. In Micah 6 and verse 8, the Bible says, "He has showed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Once again, you have an obligation toward God, to walk humbly with thy God, and then to love justice and mercy. You cannot fear God without keeping His commandments. You cannot fear God without giving Him the glory that is due in His name, and, at the same time, giving to others that which you can give unto them because of the grace in your heart and in your life.

Paul commends Philemon as a well-rounded Christian because he understands his duty toward God and also understands his duty toward man. He refers to faith in Christ because faith relates primarily to Jesus Christ. It is only in Him and through Him and to Him that we receive any of the blessings of God, as Ephesians 1 and verse 3 tells us: He's given us all blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The Meaning of 'Communication' as Fellowship (Koinonia)

Paul is praying. He says, "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and thy faith." Verse 6 is one of the petitions that Paul asked of God for Philemon: "that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the

acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." Paul prays for the communication of Philemon's faith. The word communication is unique. When we hear communication, we normally think of radio, TV, speech, lectures, letters, Internet blogs, or internet posts. The word for communication here is the Greek word koinonia.

It is translated as fellowship twelve times in our Bible. It is translated as communion four times and then communication, distribution, contribution, and to communicate each one time. So the majority of the time it is translated as fellowship or communion. So the word here actually refers then to a sharing, to a participation, to a communion, to an intimate fellowship. What it does refer to a contribution, which I will show you just a little bit later, that contribution is an exhibition of, or the embodiment of the proof of real genuine fellowship. So when he talks about the communication of thy faith, he's actually talking about the fellowship. So the word faith then, of course in verse 6, refers to that which we believe. In the context, it refers to that which we believe about Christ, it refers to that which we believe about the Word of God.

So here is the point I want to emphasize. When Paul is talking about the communication of your faith, he's talking about more than mere words. He's talking more than, well, let me tell you what I believe. He's talking about more than that. Well, let me share with you the Word of God. He's talking about more than that. Paul is teaching that the communication of our faith is far more than words.

It involves a fellowship, it involves a participation, it involves a communion. If you and I are obeying the scriptures, if we are loving the brethren, if we are ministering to the saints, then we're communicating our faith. If we are not obeying the Scriptures, if we are not loving the brethren, if we are not ministering to the saints, then we are not communicating our faith. That's what the Apostle Paul is telling us. I want you to see how the word fellowship or communication is used in Scriptures.

Hold the little book of Philemon, but go first in your Bibles to the book of Acts chapter 2, and let's look at verse 42. In each of

these instances, the word communication is translated as fellowship. Remember I told you it's translated fellowship 12 times. So notice Acts chapter 2 and look if you would please at verse 42. Here it is. Acts 2 verse 42. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread in prayers." Now watch this. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and communication and in breaking of bread and prayers. Now, what was their communication? What was their fellowship? It was continuing in doctrine, yes, but in breaking of bread, communion, and in prayers.

There was this intimate relationship. There was a working out of that faith. There was a demonstration of that faith. In 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 9, the Scripture says this: “God is faithful, by whom you were called under the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” I think that in this passage you should be extremely thankful that it is far more than just mere words. Let me read it again like this: “God is faithful by whom you were called under the communication of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

So what did God do when He called us into communication or fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ? He placed us into the body of Christ; He gave us grace, He gave us mercy. There is far more to fellowship than simply communication of words. It is an intimate relationship, a working out of that faith, and a demonstration of that faith.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 4, here is a passage where the word fellowship really implies a contribution to the saints. The Apostle Paul had taken up an offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem. He speaks of this offering, saying, “praying us with much entreaty that we should receive the gift, that is the gift that these folks had raised, the men of Macedonia, that we would receive the gift and take unto us the fellowship or the communication of the ministering of the saints.” How did the brethren in Macedonia communicate with the saints in Jerusalem? It is true they sent an offering. But, going back to verse 1, “Moreover, brethren, we do you the will of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.”

In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For to their power, Paul bore record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves. Here is real, genuine fellowship. They were identifying with the poor saints at Jerusalem; although they were poor themselves, those at Jerusalem were even poorer. So they sacrificed, and Paul said he was going to take this offering. In verse 4, he calls it "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

The word communication means far more than mere words. In Philippians 2:1, the Apostle Paul writes, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, of any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy." Here he speaks of the fellowship of the Spirit. Aren't you thankful the Holy Spirit does not simply say something to you and drop it? It is not mere words. The Holy Spirit convicts us, leads us, comforts us, and consoles us. There is far more than mere words.

In Philippians 3:10, Paul writes concerning Christ, "that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." When he uses the word fellowship, it is the same word as communication: that I may know the communication of His sufferings. The fellowship of His sufferings means more than mere words. We suffer with Christ. He is despised; we are despised. He is rejected; we are rejected. He is hated; we are hated. Paul said he wanted to know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings.

The word communication means far more than words; it means fellowship. Fellowship is real communication. I can say something to you and it not be communication, or I can say something to you and communicate something entirely different. I can look at you and say, "Now do you really think I love you when I say like that?" You know what I am saying: I really do not like you; I am just being forced to say this. I am saying one thing but communicating another. Our Lord is telling us here that real, genuine communication involves fellowship.

Go back to Philemon, verse 6: he says that the communication of thy faith may become effectual. So now he is praying that

Philemon's fellowship, or communication of his faith, would be effectual.

Effectual Faith: Energetic and Operative

The word for effectual is the Greek word energes, which literally means energetic. In fact, that is where we get our English word energetic, straight from the Greek. It means energetic, effectual, active, operative, and powerful. So he is praying that the fellowship, or communication, of Philemon's faith will become operative and powerful. Let me show you two verses where this same word is used.

Look in Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 7. Here is the same Greek word: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power." That is, by the energetic, active, operative working of His power. What is he saying? I was effectually made a minister. I was called into the ministry. Why? Because of the energetic power of God.

Look also in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 16. Here is the same word: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual or energetic working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love."

This is true physically, and it is also true spiritually. Why do some of us go to chiropractors? Why do some of us go to doctors? Because sometimes there is some part in our body that just quits working or does not work the way it ought to. If our body is to function the way it should be, there must be an energetic, or effectual, working of every part. That is true physically. That is true spiritually.

Here is what he is saying to Philemon: I want the fellowship, or communication, of your faith to be made operative, effectual, and active in every area.

In Galatians 5 and verse 6, here is the same exact Greek word; it is just translated differently: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith

which worketh by love." The word "worketh" there is energes, which literally means faith which is made effectual by love, faith that is operative by love, or faith that is powerful by love. Here is the word: worketh. Do you remember James's argument in James 2 and verse 18?

"Yea, a man may say thou hast faith, and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." That is faith which worketh by love. So he is praying that Philemon's communication, or the fellowship, of his faith would be made effectual, made powerful, by his works. Thirdly, in Philemon chapter 1, verse 6, he says, "that the communication of thy faith may become effectual or powerful by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." The third part of this petition is that Philemon's communication of his faith would not only be powerful and energetic, but would become powerful and energetic by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in Him, in Christ Jesus.

Acknowledging Every Good Thing in Christ

What does that mean? Let me give you some answers. First of all, I believe it means this: we, as children of faith, must confess and acknowledge that whatever we are, whatever we have, and whatever we do that is good, upright, and holy is only in us by the grace of God. We must recognize that we are what we are only by the grace of God.

What did the Apostle Paul say in Romans 7 and verse 18? "I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." Pray tell, what is in us that is good by nature? Nothing. That is what the Apostle Paul said. There is not one thing good in us by nature. All of our works are filthy rags. We are worthless.

I want you to see these verses. Turn to Isaiah 26 and then Philippians chapter 2. Look at Isaiah 26, verse 12. You say, "But wait a minute, Brother Weaver, I do some mighty good works from time to time." That is wonderful. But the question is, if you do good works, why do you do them? Look at Isaiah 26 and verse 12: "Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us." If there is any good thing in us, it is only there by the grace

of God. Any good thing in us, any good thing at all, is only there by the grace of God.

Now look in your Bibles to Philippians chapter 2, beginning with verse 12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as you've always obeyed, not only in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who worketh in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure." You say, "But I prayed this morning." Who put the desire to pray in your heart? "But I read my Bible." Who put the desire to read your Bible in your heart? "But I helped my neighbor." Who put the desire in your heart to help your neighbor? "But I want to be holy." Who put the desire in your heart to be holy?

What did He say? "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do His good pleasure." Therefore, we are to work out that which God has put in us with fear and trembling. We are to work out our faith, putting it into everyday practice and everyday application.

Remember that I started this message by quoting Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

Now you come down to verse 10: “For we are His workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk therein.” That grace and that faith which He gave us evidence themselves in good works.

Look at what the Apostle Paul thought of his pedigree and his good works. In Philippians chapter 3, beginning with verse 4, he says, “Though I might also have confidence in the flesh, if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.” If you want to trust in the flesh, Paul says, “Here is my pedigree.”

“Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” That is his interpretation of it. Then he says, “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all

things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

What did the Apostle Paul say? "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." If he had anywhere he should boast, it was nothing but dung. That is all. It is worthless. So when Paul prays for Philemon in verse 7—or verse 6, it is—that "the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus," the first thing it means is that we must recognize everything we are, everything we have, and everything we ever will be or ever will have is only by the grace of God. Period.

When someone comes to me and says, "Pastor, you should hear what so-and-so said about you," my standard response is, "Well, I have two. First, if they are talking about me, they are leaving some poor widow alone. Second, if they really knew me the way God did, they would probably say a whole lot worse things than that about me." Nothing in us is any good. You say, "But you are loving, kind, and helpful." If I am that in any degree whatsoever, it is because of the grace of God, because man would not be that way by nature.

Secondly, it means that others should be able to recognize the difference in us and know that God has done something in us, through us, and for us. They should be asking themselves, "Why is that man different? Why is that lady not like everyone else?" Then they must come to the conclusion that the reason we are what we are is because of the grace of God in our lives.

Look at 1 Corinthians 4:7. I love this passage, and this is what God would have others see in the communication of our faith. The Apostle Paul asks, "For whom maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, what is thou glory, if thou hadst not received it?" What makes you different? The grace of God. You know that, and now God says, "I want others to know that as well."

The meaning is that every good thing in the saints or among us should be acknowledged as coming to us in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of all grace dwells and through whom all things are communicated to us. We should acknowledge individually that everything is of God, and it should be our purpose and goal to let others see and know that the only reason we are different is because of God. Thirdly, we should praise God, our heavenly Father, and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is pleased to use us in any capacity whatsoever.

I often think of the ministry that God has not only given me, but given this assembly. You have no idea of the people impacted by these messages—not just on the internet, but through the DVDs and CDs that Roy sends out, the tapes we send out, and the traveling. I have to stop and think: Who am I, Lord, to be used of You in any way whatsoever?

What did the Apostle Paul say? We have this treasure in earthen vessels. We are nothing but flesh and blood. We have no power of our own. We are helpless, useless, and powerless in and of ourselves. The fact that God would condescend to use us in any degree is a miracle and a blessing. When we consider how we have sinned against God in times past and still are sinners, the fact that God would use us to help a brother, bless someone, share, or teach something to someone is a miracle in and of itself. What did he say? Look back in Philemon 1 and verse 6: “That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.”

Applications and Conclusion

Let me make two applications. First, if our testimony is in word only, then we have a defective and deficient faith. Faith works by love, and love is the fulfilling of the law. If others are to see Christ in us, they must see that we are different. They will want to know what makes us different, and that difference is the grace of God through Jesus Christ. It cannot be word only; we have to live our faith. We do not live it on Sunday. We live it seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day.

Second, we must seek Him to make our lives effectual, energetic, and operative to the fulfilling of His Word and His will. What was Paul doing? Paul was praying for Philemon that his life would be effectual. What did God say in Zechariah 4 and verse 6?

"Not by word nor power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." It has to be the Holy Spirit of God that makes our lives effectual, operative, energetic in the fellowship and communication of our faith.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee today. We thank You for Your love and grace and mercy. Lord, I pray for myself and for each of these and the saints that hear my voice, that You would enable us to communicate, to fellowship our faith, and that You would make it effectual, energetic, and powerful for Your honor and Your glory. Help us to bring our lives into greater conformity to Your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 22

The Man of God And His Books

April 1, 2013

Introduction: The Neglect of Reading

This may seem like an unusual message, but I think it is going to be a very practical message as well. I hope it will not only excite you, but rebuke you in one sense of the word and encourage you to do a whole lot more reading.

In 1 Timothy chapter 4, beginning with verse 12, the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy: “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

The Apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy to give attendance to reading basically falls on deaf ears today. Hardly anyone reads anymore, even pastors. Many do not even read their Bibles.

We have come to the day when everybody loves amusement. The word "muse" means to think; it means to meditate. When you put the alpha, or "A," in front of it, "amuse" means not to think. Obviously, we have fallen into a society that is prone to amusement.

I recently heard about a pastor who described his position as a good job. His denomination sent him outlines, and he filled them in each Sunday for his message. There was no real need for him even to read or study. He only did what was necessary to keep his job.

There is a vast difference between a ministry and a job, and between having been called into the ministry and having chosen the ministry as a profession. At a wedding, I once heard someone compliment a pastor on the job he had done. His response was, "Of course I did a good job. I'm a professional."

Stop and think about this. There is a vast difference between being called into the ministry and being called into a profession. I guarantee you, I would not have put up with many things over the last forty-seven years if I had not known it was a ministry and that the Lord had called me into it. It is just that simple.

I have a good friend, and most of you know him. When we get together, we often joke. He says, "You know what we need to do? We need to find us a large church that likes twenty-minute sermonettes and settle down there. We could take one message, divide it into four points, and preach one message for an entire month. There would never be a need to study again because we have enough messages to last us a lifetime." That is true. But we laugh because neither one of us can stop studying or stop preaching. That is the way it is in the average congregation: a twenty-minute sermon, and that is it.

However, when it comes to reading—biblical reading and reading otherwise—we have to be selective, because obviously we cannot read everything. Solomon was right when he said in

Ecclesiastes 12:12, “And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.” There are many books today, and most of them are absolutely worthless.

Anyone can write a book and say anything, but that does not make the book accurate or truthful. Study is hard work and weariness to the flesh. That is one reason most people do not engage in it, even pastors.

Do you realize that it is much easier to visit, fellowship, talk, play, and sometimes even pray than it is to study? If we read outside the Word of God, we must make sure that our outside reading is worthwhile. Let me give you one quick illustration. I have been preaching for forty-seven years. I remember when God first called me to preach; I was so hungry to learn.

I went to a Christian bookstore and bought a book on the Exodus. I was excited because I had read Exodus 12, 13, 14, and 15, and how the children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea. Here was a book on the Exodus, and I thought, “Man, this is going to explain everything that I need to know. It is going to answer all these questions.” I wanted to know how God sovereignly and powerfully separated that sea and the children of Israel walked across on dry ground.

I got home and started reading the book. All of a sudden, I realized that not only had I wasted my money, but I was wasting my time reading it. The author stated that Moses knew when the tide would be out and led the children of Israel across at that time. Pharaoh, on the other hand, did not know the tide tables; he tried to cross while the tide was coming in, and thus he and his army drowned.

That was what was in the book. I thought, “What a farce! Not only what a farce, but what blasphemy!” The Bible says they went across on dry ground. You do not get dry ground just with the tide going out and coming back in. Moses had been in Midian for forty years and then came back. Pharaoh, who lived in that area, would certainly have known the tide tables. What blasphemy! I burned the book. That is what happened in Acts chapter 19 and verse 19:

"Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver."

These were people who got right with God and had all these books on the occult and all that. They brought them and burned them. Many books are absolutely worthless. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has a book entitled "Commenting on Commentaries." Concerning one book he comments on, he says, "This book is an absolute must for housemaidens who wish to start a good fire each morning."

Well, that's the way it goes. Unhappily, there are many such books like that today. I want you to stop and think that our forefathers were far more widely read than we are today. Our forefathers knew far much more than we know today. Evolution is not true, but devolution may be. We're going down, not up. We're going backwards, not forward. Moreover, they understood, our forefathers did, that God created everything and therefore everything had importance in light of God's absolute sovereignty. And what they wrote and what they read, they did so because they understood the theological implications of God's sovereignty.

Now, let me just point something out to you. You remember Jesse and Frank James. I hope you remember that their father, Robert James, was a Baptist pastor. I hope you also remember the three messages that I preached a few years back on the world in times of Jesse James. If you haven't heard those messages, I would challenge you to listen to them because I believe they will challenge your thinking and your understanding. But I'm bringing that up just to point this out: how well read their father was as a Baptist pastor. Listen to this. Their father, Robert James, with all of his intellectual interest, is indicated in an inventory of his estate filed in Clay County, Missouri Probate Court in 1851.

It listed in his library 51 books dealing with mathematics, chemistry, philosophy, theology, astronomy, grammar, history, literature, Greek, Latin, public speaking, and many other subjects. You know what most people do not know is that Robert James was also one of the founders of William Jewell College, which is a Baptist college in Liberty, Missouri. He was also one of the original

trustees, and that college is still standing today. And what a lot of people do not know is this, according to J.A. Dacus in his book, who was a neighbor of the James family, he said that Jesse James' Bible was so underlined you could hardly read it. And that Jesse frequently quoted scripture. Frank, his brother, oftentimes quoted Shakespeare.

The point I'm trying to make is this: you can't quote if you don't read. We have all become addicted to the TV set. We like to sit down like little zombies and watch frivolous, stupid things that have no impact upon our lives except to destroy them. And we refuse to read. What we need in this day and time is a new awakening, much like the Reformation, when learning and Christianity were both revived at the same time.

When you think about the Reformers, the Reformers combined deep study with active ministry. And these truths must be developed together.

In the context of 1 Timothy chapter 4, I want to emphasize one verse and one phrase in that verse. In verse 13, the apostle told Timothy, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” Note what he said: “give attendance to reading.” Let us consider this truth three ways. First, we will consider the admonition linguistically—that is, what the words actually mean. Like the apostle Paul, we need to study so that we can keep back nothing that is profitable.

The Admonition Linguistically

That is what he said in Acts 20 to those people: “You know how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.” We need to study so that we might keep back nothing that is profitable. Second Timothy 3:16 says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Verse 17 continues, “That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

If all Scripture is inspired of God, and “inspired” literally means God exhaled, or God breathed, then we must conclude that each word must be understood, for each word is inspired and therefore

profitable to us. In verse 13, Paul says, “Till I come, give attendance to reading.” What does the word “attendance” mean? The Greek word is prosecho, which literally means to have to or towards. It implies giving attention unto, taking heed, cleaving unto, turning the mind unto, and being addicted to. Literally, he tells Timothy that his mind is to become addicted to reading.

The same exact thought appears in 1 Corinthians chapter 16 and verse 15. It is not the same word, but it is the same exact thought. Paul writes there about this matter. The implication is giving attention unto, taking heed, cleaving unto, turning the mind unto, and being addicted to reading.

Paul says, “I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints).” There is that word addicted: they have addicted themselves unto the ministry of the saints. Paul therefore commands Timothy—and not only Timothy, but believers as well—to give attention unto reading, to give himself unto it, and to become addicted to reading.

Incidentally, when Paul tells Timothy in verse 13, “Till I come, give attendance to reading,” it is a present active imperative, which literally means that it is a command. Paul never really left Timothy any room to wiggle out. He simply says, “Become addicted to reading.”

Now, when Paul tells Timothy to give attendance to reading, he does not exactly specify what kind of reading. Simply looking at this verse on the surface, was the reading to which Paul commanded him to give attention public reading or private reading? Understand that from the Old Testament into the New Testament there was always the public reading of the Word of God.

For instance, hold 1 Timothy, but turn in your Bibles to Nehemiah chapter 9, beginning at verse 3. The Bible says, “And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.” Notice that they stood and publicly read the Word of God for one quarter of the day.

Then turn to Acts chapter 13 and verse 15. This shows that even in the New Testament, the Word of God was publicly read every time they assembled: “And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” Watch then Paul stood

The one who stood up and beckoned with his hand said, “If ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” Can you imagine anybody being stupid enough to ask the Apostle Paul if he had anything to say? He was just asking for a sermon. Paul said, “I just happen to have some.” Read the rest of the chapter. He taught them a history lesson as well as preaching to them.

Then, in Acts 15:21, the Bible says, “For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.” While the reading, or public reading, of the Word of God is not to be neglected, I think the context of 1 Timothy chapter 4 demonstrates very clearly that the emphasis is on private reading. Linguistically, Paul tells Timothy he is to become addicted to reading.

The Admonition Contextually

Secondly, consider the admonition contextually. When you take the admonition, “give attendance to reading,” in its context, it is obvious that it refers to private reading. Moreover, the phrase applies specifically to the Word of God, but it also has wider implications. When he says, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine,” if you read the Scriptures frequently, consistently, and prayerfully enough, you will come to the conclusion of the old black preacher who said that their Bible showed who shed a whole lot of light on them commentaries. That is a fact. You will begin to understand what the Scriptures really mean.

We're told in verse 13, "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Exhortation and doctrine naturally follow reading. Since Timothy was a young preacher, Paul is giving him sound pastoral counsel. You cannot communicate that which you do not know. You cannot teach that which you do not

understand. Reading must come first. Yet it is not just reading for reading's sake. It must be sound, serious, and useful reading.

Paul knew Timothy's diligence. Timothy served with Paul as a son, so he knew him very well. And yet he recommends to Timothy diligent, personal reading of the scriptures. How in the world shall pastors teach others if the pastors are not eager to learn? One thing each of us must remember, I don't care how old we are, or how long we have been in the ministry or sitting under the ministry: we must always be a student. We must always be willing to learn. If somebody like the Apostle Paul and somebody like Timothy are advised to study so that they may progress from day to day, how much more do you and I need to follow this counsel and advice?

John Calvin said, "Lest it should be thought that careless reading was enough, he at the same time shows that it must be explained with a view to usefulness when he enjoins him to give earnest attention to doctrine and exhortation, as if he enjoined him to learn in order to communicate to others. It is proper also to attend to this order that he places reading before doctrine and exhortation. For undoubtedly the scripture is the fountain of all wisdom from which pastors must draw all that they place before their flock." Give attention to reading first; exhortation and doctrine follow reading.

Look also at verse 12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Timothy was to be an example to other believers in personal study, in his conduct, in his love, in his faithfulness, and in his purity. In order to be an example in all those things, he first had to have a personal example in what we would call personal, private study of the scriptures. By implication, he would also be an example to other believers in studies beyond the scriptures.

Paul, who issued the command, was well read in plenty of different books, not just the Bible. Do you remember that passage in Acts 26 and verse 24? When Paul was preaching and teaching, Festus, the ruler to whom Paul was witnessing, cried out, "Paul, much learning doth make thee mad." Paul was a very excellent

scholar. Paul not only studied the Scripture; Paul studied even pagan literature.

How do we know that? The answer is that, at least on two occasions, Paul quotes the pagans. In Acts chapter 17, Paul is giving his message on Mars Hill, and in verse 28 the Apostle Paul says, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." He knew what the Athenian poets had written. He had read it.

Again, in Titus chapter 1 and verse 12, the Apostle Paul quotes a pagan. He is using a pagan pretty well against the pagans. He says, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies." The point is that he is quoting these men. You cannot quote if you have not read. He knew what they had written.

Now, let me show you how important books were to the Apostle Paul. In 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verse 13, Paul writes, "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." He says, "Timothy, when you come to see me, make sure you bring my books, and especially the parchments."

It is impossible to determine exactly what kind of books are meant here. They could have been portions of the Old Testament. They could have been classical writings, writings by other Christians, or even books written by the Apostle Paul himself. But it is worthy to remark and worthy to note that even the Apostle Paul did not travel without books. He found them in some way absolutely necessary, not only to his ministry but to his personal life.

He especially asked for the parchments. What were the parchments? The Greek word used here is “membranas,” from which we get our English word “membrane.” It occurs only here in the New Testament and refers to skin, membrane, or parchment. Dressed skins were among the earliest writing materials before papermaking became well received. These books and parchments, then, seem to have been something absolutely separate.

Some have suggested that the parchments may have been Paul's own writings, his memorandums, journals, unfinished letters, or the originals that he wrote. They may also have been originals from another author. We do not know. But the Apostle Paul was saying, "I want them. You bring me my books, and you bring me my parchments."

We may never have thought to ask where Paul was when he requested these things. He was in prison, waiting to have his head cut off. He was saying, "I am not wasting my time. I may be in prison and facing death, but I want my books, because I will study and read till the day I die." When we understand that Paul was waiting for death and read in 1 Timothy 4:13, "Till I come, give attendance to reading," we see its importance.

Calvin said, "It is evident from this that the Apostle Paul had not given over reading, though he was already preparing for death. Where are those who think that they have made so great a progress that they do not need any more exercise? Which of them will dare to compare himself with the Apostle Paul? Still more does this expression refute the madness of those men who, despising books and condemning all reading, boast of nothing but their own divine inspirations. But let us know that this passage gives to all believers a recommendation of constant reading that they may profit by it." There are those who ask, Why should they fritter away their days over books?

When knowledge comes in a flash, as when Paul was caught up into the third heaven, it is extraordinary. But if you are looking for flashes from heaven, you will spend a lifetime waiting. Even the apostle Paul, who was caught up into heaven, nevertheless told Timothy, "Bring me my books. Bring me my books. I want those manuscripts. I want those parchments. Bring them."

When you consider 1 Timothy 4:13 linguistically, Paul says you become addicted to reading. Contextually, he says you must read before you can exhort and before you can understand doctrine. In that context, it refers to private reading, not public reading. Thirdly, consider the admonition applicatorily: How does this command apply to us?

The Admonition Applicatorily

Paul says, “Give attention to reading.” Do we simply read our Bibles and let that be it? I know that the Sovereign Lord is the great educator, and no one teaches like Him. There is nothing that can replace your Bible. You have to understand that. The Bible is first and foremost. But the Bible also tells us in Ephesians chapter 4 that one of the gifts God has given to the church is pastor-teachers. What do pastor-teachers do? They teach. How do they teach? Orally, yes, but they also write.

Many preachers have written books. If you say, “I’m not going to read anything but the Bible,” then you are denying the gift God has given to His church—the pastor-teachers—and denying their preaching and teaching, even if it is by reading. One may learn by listening, and one may learn by reading. There are many good and godly books. Books do not necessarily need to be theological in order to be good or godly. Whatever is written ought to be written with theological implications and with an understanding of God’s absolute sovereignty.

One book I have recommended over the years is a little paperback, The Central Significance of Culture, written by Francis Nigel Lee. In it, he effectively demonstrates that we have been called unto dominion, and that we are to conquer and exercise dominion in every field. He also demonstrates that a number of things were developed by the ungodly.

You remember Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain? One was an artificer in brass, and another was a musician. Those men had talents and culture. We are to take everything they developed and bring it into submission and conformity to the Word of God, for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. I am simply pointing out that there are so many areas that you and I need to cover.

For instance, I have books—plenty of books—and a lot of history books. I love history because history is nothing less than the eternal decree of God coming to pass in time. History is the outworking of God's eternal decree. If you want to see the hand of God stretched out against His enemies, study history. If you want

to see the hand of God stretched out in redemption and deliverance, study history. All history is God's history.

I have medical books. Doc has medical books. Rebecca has medical books. Do you not need to learn how to take care of yourself and, many times, how to take care of your own problems? Everything Dr. Bowen knows medically, he either got out of a book or somebody taught him, and some of it came with experience along the way.

Do you realize that everything I know, I got out of a book—either the Bible or some other written book? We are too far down the line to be original; it is impossible. Solomon said, “There's nothing new under the sun.” Biology is important: bios, life; ology, knowledge—the knowledge of life. What about music, business, education, and economics? If only fifty percent of the American people really knew biblical economics, we could change everything. The American people do not know money or credit; they do not understand these areas, and they do not read in them.

Whether you are talking about medical books, educational books, music books, theology books, history books, or whatever you want to read, do you realize that if you can read a book in two, three, or five days, you can learn in five days what it took the author twenty years to learn? How much better off are you? You have it in five days, though it took him twenty years. We have lost the art of reading and the desire to read. In order to benefit from our Bibles and our books, we must remember two truths.

The first is that more depends upon the quality of what we read than the quantity. I know that all of God's Word is quality. But many people read the Bible like a magazine; they keep going and going, reading and reading. I am not against Bible reading, but many Christians use it as a source of spiritual pride: “Well, I read twenty chapters today. How much did you read?”

When it comes to reading the Bible, or really any other book, I would rather read one paragraph and understand it than read twenty chapters and not understand a thing. I would rather take one of Doc's medical books, read one chapter, and understand it than finish the entire medical book without knowing a thing,

merely to say, “I read this book.” Likewise, I would probably rather read one old Puritan book than twenty modern-day books. I would get more out of the old Puritan book. Why? Because those men were scholars. They studied.

Most of what we read today is absolutely worthless, useless, and time-consuming. I have no earthly idea how many books I have burned, discarded, or thrown away in forty-seven years. Why? They were worthless, and I did not want anyone else to get hold of them.

Practical Guidance on Book Selection

How do you escape purchasing worthless books? Let me make some suggestions. First, ask your pastor. I do not know a lot of things, but I do know something about books, because my life has been about books. I probably have twelve to fifteen thousand of them in my library. Ask me. I may know, or I may not know, but I probably will, especially if it is theological.

Second, if I am not available, or you do not want to ask me, look at the book, research the author, and look at the publisher. If the publisher says, “Published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society,” there is no reason to bother with the book—not unless you are Jehovah’s Witness. Or if it is published by the United Presbyterian Church or the United Methodist Church, most of them are as liberal as the day is long. You would be wasting your time and your money.

Third, peruse the book before you purchase it. Look at the table of contents, read the foreword, flip through the book, and read something at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end. You can get a pretty good idea simply by perusing it.

Fourth, experience comes with time and money. You will throw away a lot of money buying books if you do not follow those other three steps. You will waste your time and your money. If we are going to profit from our Bibles and our books, we must understand that quality must precede quantity. There is nothing wrong with quantity as long as it can be pursued with quality.

The Principle of Use and Growth

More depends upon the use of what we read. By reflection and meditation, we apply the truths to our conduct and our daily conversation. Dr. Isaac Watts said, “A well furnished library and a capacious memory are indeed of singular use toward the improvement of the mind. But if all your learning be nothing else but a mere amassment of what others have written, without a due penetration into its meaning, and without a judicial choice and determination of your own sentiments, I do not see what title your head has to true learning above yourselves.”

Let me spell that out for you. Here is what he said: If the truth does not become yours in the sense that you understand it, comprehend it, and are able to make application of the truth, you are no better off than when you started. That is true biblically, and it is true in any other book. I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Mark, chapter 4. Here is the truth again.

I have repeated this so many times, but I am going to give it to you one more time. Here is the principle of Scripture: If you do not use the truth, you lose the truth. I do not care what area it is—painting, martial arts, or music. If you do not use it, you lose it. Look in Mark 4, verse 23. Our Lord says, “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” And he said unto them, “Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.” Now let me stop there. “And unto you that hear shall more be given.” In other words, if you take what I give you, understand it, apply it, and use it, I am going to give you more. But look at the next verse: “For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” If you do not use it, you lose it.

“And unto you that hear shall more be given.” In other words, if you take what I give you, understand it, apply it, and use it, I am going to give you more. “For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” If you do not use it, you lose it.

Let me tell you what Dr. Charles Bridges said in his view to the Christian ministry. He said this: “Not to read or study at all is to

tempt God." Now stop and think about this. Not to read or study at all is to tempt God. To do nothing but study is to forget the ministry. To study only to glory in one's knowledge is a shameful vanity. To study in search of the means to flatter sinners is a deplorable prevarication. But to store one's mind with the knowledge proper to the saints by studying by prayer, and to diffuse that knowledge in solid instructions and practical exhortations, this is to be a prudent, zealous, and laborious minister. You must know while you are studying.

Look back in 1 Timothy chapter 4. I want to point out something that would help not only young preachers, but also young scholars and young Christians. Beginning with verse 12, Paul says, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Notice again: "Let no man despise thy youth."

Overcoming the Contempt of Youth

Some of you may say, "I am not a youth." But how does one keep from being despised as a youth or as a novice? First, consider the word despise. The Greek word is kataphroneo, and it literally means to be held in contempt, to be despised, to be disdained, to be little thought of, or to be thought of as nothing. Everyone understands despising in this sense. You have heard someone speak and known that he knew nothing of what he was talking about. You simply said, "I am not listening to that." What did you do? You despised what he said. Paul says, "Let no man despise thy youth."

Secondly, the word youth here refers to someone of youthful age. In 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 22, Paul tells Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Thus, despise means to hold in contempt, to disdain, and to think little or nothing of; youth refers to youth.

The interesting thing is that when Paul told Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth," and also told him to flee youthful lusts, Timothy was, in all probability, in his forties. Remember, our Lord

did not begin His ministry until He was thirty. Someone in his thirties or forties was considered a young man. And so here is what the Apostle Paul is saying.

How do you overcome the disdain and contempt placed upon young preachers and young Christians who think they want to teach, exhort, or share what they have learned? The Apostle Paul tells Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth,” and then says, “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

You must live a holy, godly life. You must give close attention, even to the point of becoming addicted to reading and study, so that you may exhort in doctrine. When older heads see that you know what you are talking about, that you have theological understanding, and that you are able to control yourself emotionally, rationally, and intellectually, their disdain will turn to honor. Here is a young man with an old head: he understands and really has knowledge.

Look back at 1 Timothy 4, verses 15 and 16. In order to achieve this, so that no man despises you, it will cost you something, because it is not an easy road. Paul tells Timothy, “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

Conclusion: A Call to Read

If you do not want to be despised as a young man, you have to study and read. You have to give yourself wholly to these things and meditate upon them. What does that mean? For us today, it means turning off our television sets, opening our books, and starting to read.

I remember going to Rush Dooney’s home many years ago. After I first went there, Alice and I went almost every fall, year after year, until Rush Dooney died. The first time I visited him, in the 1970s, he had over 50,000 books in his library. You could not put a cup of coffee on the coffee table, because it was stacked high with books.

Beside the couches and chairs were stacks of books, and even beside the toilet were stacks of books. Rush Dooney read a book every day; in fact, he usually read three, four, five, or six at a time.

Books were everywhere. Come to my office, and be careful coming down my steps, because you will trip over books. If you try to slip up on us at night and come into the bedroom, do not come in on Alice's side of the bed, because you will trip over a book and break your neck. There are books everywhere. I am simply saying that you have to read. That is what the Apostle Paul is saying: Give attendance to reading. It is books and the book that gives us knowledge.

A carpenter cannot work without his tools, and a mechanic cannot work without his tools. When I take my car to the mechanic shop, there are tools everywhere. A mechanic does not use all his tools at one time, but he has them for whatever need may arise. A carpenter likewise does not use all his tools at one time.

I have books that I do not use at one time. I have some books I have not touched in years, but I know what is in them, where they are, what they contain, and how to get from them what I want. Some books are not necessarily designed simply for sitting down and reading. When you speak of a lexicon or dictionary, you do not sit down and read through it. You know how to use it and where it is. You may not read all your books at one time, but they are there, and when you need them, you may get them.

The truth of the matter is this: if you do not read, you cannot grow. If you do not grow, you cannot teach. If you refuse to read and refuse to grow, Paul said to Timothy, “Let no man despise thy youth.” But if you refuse to read and refuse to grow, you need to be despised; you need to be held in contempt, because God has commanded us to give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine.

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; till I come, give attendance to reading, and then to exhortation and to doctrine.”

We must awaken ourselves again, learn to read, and become addicted. Turn off the TV set. Read.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank you for your word and for your truths. Lord, help us to be readers. Help us to understand. Give us grace that we may follow the Apostle Paul's example and Timothy's example. Teach us, Lord, to read thy word first and foremost, and other books second, that we may learn and grow in faith and knowledge for your honor and glory. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 23

Lost Loved Ones

January 29, 2016

Introduction: The Reality of Lost Loved Ones

In Matthew 9:12–13, our Lord says, speaking to the Pharisees, “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” He then says, “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” I am not necessarily dealing with this text today; I simply want to use it to point out a fact of Scripture and go from there.

When our Lord says, “They that be whole need not a physician,” those who are self-righteous do not think they need Jesus Christ and His so great salvation. Only those who are sick, those who realize their sickness, see their need of Him. In the latter part of verse 13, He says, “For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Our Lord indicates that there are a multitude of individuals who are lost. That is, they are sinners and unsaved. Our Lord said that He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

I suppose that every family has lost loved ones. If they are not in the immediate family, they are in the extended family. Unhappily, many families have lost loved ones. Sometimes it is a spouse; sometimes it is children. When you stop and think about the results of dying unconverted, especially in the case of a spouse, it is almost unthinkable and unbearable. Think of living with and loving someone for fifty or sixty years, and then that person dies, followed by an eternal separation.

Luke 16 speaks of a great gulf between the saved and the lost. The lost cannot go to the saved, and the saved cannot go to the lost. In other words, the separation will be eternal.

I know that there are many unconverted spouses. On the other hand, there are many unconverted children and grandchildren as well. Usually, when people speak of unsaved people in the house, most parents are more concerned about their children or grandchildren, even though there may be lost adults in the house. I know the answer to that other than the fact that most people assume that an adult has lived most of his life, while the children have not lived any of theirs.

The Use of Means and God's Blessing

We certainly want to see our children converted by the grace of God. We want to pray for them, witness to them, and teach them. Certainly, we want to discipline them based upon the Word of God. In fact, there are many promises in the Word of God concerning our children. For instance, Proverbs 19:18 says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." I can attest to the fact that my father believed that verse literally, because my crying never dissuaded him from the job at hand. He took care of it, and took care of it properly.

The Bible also says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he's old he will not depart from it." Then, of course, Proverbs 23:13–14 says, "Withhold not correction from the child for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and thou shalt deliver his soul from hell."

When we think about promises like this, we have to understand that these are general promises, subject to the specific will and purpose of God. I know that God's Word is absolutely true. However, the use of means is absolutely worthless apart from God's blessing upon those means. By a general promise, I mean this: another Scripture says, "He that getteth a wife getteth a good thing and obtaineth favor of the Lord." I know some men who got a wife that didn't get a good thing, and I know some women who got a husband that didn't get a good thing as well. But these are general promises.

Oftentimes, we think the means alone are sufficient, when in reality they are not. We say, "Here's what we're going to do. We're going to use the means and just expect God to bless those means whether He does or not." When you try to use the means alone and trust in using the means alone, that's idolatry. On the other hand, if you fail to use the means God has ordained and simply think that God is going to save your children, that's presuming upon the grace and mercy of God. God has certainly ordained the means, but He must bless those means to make them effectual.

Let me give you an illustration. The Bible says in Proverbs 23 and verse 14, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and thou shalt deliver his soul from hell."

If you take that as merely using the means, one of the greatest avenues of evangelism would be to gather up a few rods, go down the street, and beat the devil out of every child you could find. Obviously, that is not it. God's blessing has to be upon that discipline, and that is certainly true in your own children as well.

You must understand that not every child who has been chastened, taught, or trained will be saved. I personally know children who were raised in a Christian home, attended a Christian school, were raised in church, and were disciplined biblically, yet are lost today with no desire to be saved. Some live perverted, wicked, and rebellious lives. On the other hand, I know children raised in a lost household who attended a government school and never went to church a day in their lives as children, yet have been saved and converted and are living happy, godly, productive Christian lives.

So what makes the difference? The answer is given in 1 Corinthians 4:7. Paul asked those Christians, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Who makes you to differ? Why are you saved while many in your family are not? Who made you to differ, and what have you received? He then says, "If you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?"

Everything you are and everything you have is yours only by the grace of God. Therefore, God must put His blessing upon those means. We cannot use the means and expect them to work apart from God's blessing.

Let me say something very clearly. It is not my intent today to upset, disturb, or disquiet any parent or spouse. As a husband and father, I pray for my wife and children, and I want to see each one saved by the grace of God. I am sure that is the desire of every godly husband and every godly parent.

There is nothing wrong with desiring that your family be converted. However, I also know this: salvation is of the Lord. It is based upon His will and based upon His pleasure. I also know from reading the Bible that there is an elect and there is a non-elect. I also know from reading the Bible that not everyone is going to be saved. In fact, the truth of the matter is this: multitudes have already died lost. Each one of them was someone's child, and probably someone's husband and someone's wife as well. Our Lord said in Matthew 25:41, "Then shall I say unto these on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Whenever we are talking about our children, there are two questions that should automatically arise in our minds, which are ultimately going to lead to a third question. So my first question is this: Why should God save my children?

Sovereignty Illustrated: The Pool of Bethesda

Now stop and think about that. Why should God save my children? You have to admit and confess that not anyone deserves salvation—not even my children, and not even myself. No one

deserves salvation. And yes, do I think my children are special? Yes. But my thinking that they are special does not mean that they are special.

You may say, "You have to understand that multitudes need saving, and your children need saving as well." But you cannot argue that you expect God to save your children just because they need saving. A lot of other people need saving as well, and they are not saved. Look at the multitudes that have died that needed to be saved, and yet they were not saved.

So let me show you. We are talking about why God should save my children. Look in your Bibles to John chapter 5. Most of you know this story, and I want to point out again the ramifications of this. In John chapter 5, we read about the pool of Bethesda and something that our Lord did. Look in John 5, verses 1 through 3. The Bible says, "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water."

In John 5, we read: “And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. And Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case. And he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled to put me in the pool. But while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.”

How many people in these porches needed healing? A great multitude. How many did our Lord heal? One. Notice something: this man never asked for healing. He did not even know who Jesus Christ was. Christ simply walked up to him and said, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.”

Why did our Lord heal only one man? He could have healed all of them just as easily as He healed the one, but He did not. Beginning in verse 21, our Lord says, “For as the Father raiseth up

the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." What is the one attribute that singles God out as God?

The answer is that He is sovereign. He does as He pleases, only as He pleases, and always as He pleases. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." Verse 22 says, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Why? "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

Jesus Christ went into that great multitude and healed one man, demonstrating that He is indeed the sovereign God of heaven and earth. Even godly Isaac had twins. Yet what did God say? "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Did Jacob deserve to be loved by God? No. Did Esau deserve to be hated by God? Yes. Everybody deserves to be hated by God because we are all sinners. But God is under no obligation to me, and God is under no obligation to anyone.

God Is Not Obligated to Save Anyone

So I can't say, "Lord, I want you to save my children because I've served you faithfully for 50 years." No. I can't say, "Lord, save my children because I think they need saving." No. God is not obligated to me. Romans chapter 11, verse 33, says, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Who hath been His counselor? Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" The answer to each question is no one. God said, if you can find anyone who first gave to Me, I will recompense it to him. But everything that we have, God gave us. Paul is showing us that we cannot bring God into obligation. The only reason God would save my wife, my children, or anyone else in my family is because of His own mercy and grace in Jesus Christ. God does not owe me or anyone else anything but justice. I can assure you I do not want that, and neither do you.

Examining Our Motives for Desiring Salvation of Loved Ones

The first question I should ask is this: Why should God save my children? Here is the second question: Why do I desire for God to save my children? Am I interested in their salvation just for their benefit? Do I want them to be saved so that they can live a good, decent, moral, upright life and not have very many problems? Do I desire to see them saved for my benefit? Do I want them saved because I do not want to be shamed and embarrassed by their rebellion and wickedness? If I say, "I desire to see my children saved because I want to see them in heaven," then I have to start the process all over: Why should God save my children? Why do I desire to see them? Everybody wants to see their children in heaven, and here is the third question all of this leads to: Where do God's honor, God's glory, and God's will fit in with my desires?

So I have to ask myself: What if my children are not God's elect? What if my children are never converted? What if they are doomed and condemned? If the condemnation of my children honors and glorifies God's justice and wrath, and God does not save them, should I be upset with God? The answer is no. If I am a child of God, should I not desire that my heavenly Father be glorified in all things, which would include my children?

Now I understand, and you should as well, that usually God places His elect in households. Usually—that is a general rule. Psalm 68:6 says, "God setteth the solitary in families." Usually that is what God does, though not always; there are certainly exceptions. God has placed the responsibility of nurturing and admonishing the children upon the parents, in general, and the father in particular. Because the Bible says in Ephesians 6:4, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I have to understand that salvation is of the Lord, but I do have a responsibility not only toward my children, but toward my family as well.

Someone will object, as I have heard for many years: "But it's God's will to save everybody." Really? If it is God's will to save everybody, here is my question: How can anybody die lost? It would be impossible for anyone to die lost. Is God not sovereign?

Is He not omnipotent? Is He not all-powerful? Is it not impossible to resist His will? Let me show you. Look in Romans 9. You are right there. Look in Romans 9 and verse 19. Look at what the Apostle argues here. Romans 9:19 says, “Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?”

This indicates that no one has ever really and truly resisted the will of God. You have to understand that there is an open, revealed will in the Bible, but there is also the secretive will of God, which is what is being spoken of here. No one has ever resisted that. Man is not greater than God. Man is not sovereign; God is sovereign. If God’s will cannot be defeated, thwarted, overthrown, or annulled, obviously God’s will is not going to be resisted. If God’s will can be overthrown, thwarted, and annulled, then God is not God.

Clarifying 2 Peter 3:9: God's Will and the Elect

You know what He said in Daniel 4:35? Listen to this: God “doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and in the inhabitants of the earth and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest thou?” So nobody can thwart God. No one can stop God. But people say it is not God’s will that any should perish, and then they immediately run to 2 Peter 3. I want you to turn there. Look, if you would please, at verse 9. I want you to be able to handle this passage, so I am going to explain it to you. In 2 Peter 3:9, the Bible says, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise.”

“Some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” You say, “There it is in black and white. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Now, it is just like when you are selling real estate. The three main concerns are location, location, location. When you are coming to the Scripture, the three main concerns are context, context, context. So go back to 2 Peter 1 and see the remote context, and see to whom Peter is writing. Watch this, 2 Peter 1, verse 1: “Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, grace and

peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."

To whom is Peter writing? He is writing to believers, to those who are already saved. Now look in 2 Peter chapter 3, verses 1 and 2, and let us see who is in the immediate context: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of our Lord and Saviour." In verse 1 he is writing to those who are beloved, which would be believers, and to those with pure minds, believers, reminding them to be mindful of the words, that is, of the Scripture. He is writing to believers. When you look at verses 1 and 2, believers are in the context.

The contrast begins in verses 3 and 4. Now he is talking about the unsaved. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they are willingly ignorant of."

So he is talking about individuals who are beloved, who have a pure mind, and who know the Word of God. Now here come some scoffers, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? Nothing has changed. Everything is the same." And he says, "For this they are willingly ignorant." That is, they do not want the truth, and they are not willing to listen to the truth.

In verses 5 through 7, Peter gives an illustration, but we will pick it up in verse 8: "But, beloved." Once again, who is he talking to? He is talking to Christians. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Now verse 9: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Go back to verse 8. What were the scoffers saying? “Where is the promise of His coming? Because all things are continuing just the way they were.” Peter says, “I don't want you to be swallowed up with that scoffing and mocking and ridicule. I want you to understand something: one day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.” Man cannot tell time, especially God's time, because God's time is totally different from our time. Do not be like those scoffers.

Now watch verse 9: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise.” That is singular, not plural. God has given us many promises in the Bible, so why is the word “promise” here singular? It refers to a specific promise. If you look back at verse 4, you will find it: “And saying, Where is the promise of His coming?” Thus, when verse 9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise,” it means the promise of sending back His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Time is different with God than it is with man. Therefore, the Lord is not slack; He is not hesitant, backward, or late. “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness”—those scoffers back in verse 4—“but is longsuffering to”—what is that next word?

Peter is writing to believers—beloved people with pure minds. He says, “But the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” In both the remote and immediate context, he is talking about believers, His sheep, His elect. There is such a thing as an ellipsis, when something is put in parentheses to clarify what is being said. Thus verse 9 may be understood this way: “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any”—of us—“should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

When is God the Father going to send back Jesus Christ His Son? The answer is: when the last of His sheep is brought into the fold; when all of God’s elect are converted; when every believer believes and is saved by the grace of God. He is not going to send Him back before. The scoffers ask, “Where is the promise of His

coming?" They say that all things continue as they were. But God is not slack concerning His promise. He is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any of us should perish.

What would happen if Jesus Christ came back today while some of His elect were still unconverted? The Bible says in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 that when He comes back, He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What would happen then?

Let me show you what I am talking about. Look in your Bibles to Isaiah 53, beginning at verse 10. This is the great passage on the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "Yet it pleased the Lord," that is, God the Father, "to bruise Him.

"He hath put Him to grief when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin. He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. By His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors. And He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

What does the Bible say in verse 10? "He shall see the travail of His soul." What does it say in verse 11? "He shall see the travail of His soul." God is not going to send back His Son until every individual for whom He has died is converted. That is all 2 Peter 3 is saying. It refers to believers, to God's sheep, to God's elect, however you want to name them.

Godly Parents Do Not Guarantee Godly Children

Godly parents do not always produce godly children and grandchildren. One of the greatest and godliest kings in the Bible was Hezekiah. Do you happen to know who his son was? Manasseh, one of the most wicked, vile kings in the southern kingdom. Asa was his grandfather, and Asa was another godly man. Godly men do not always produce godly children and

grandchildren. It is not necessarily the fault of the parents or grandparents that their children and grandchildren are lost.

Let us look at Genesis 15. In this passage, God is entering into a covenant with Abram. Beginning at verse 13: “And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterwards they shall come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, and thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

Notice this: the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. God was going to kill all those Amorites and give their land to Abram. “And it came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces,” that is, the sacrifice. “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaims, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, the Jebusites.” All this land of all these wicked people God was giving to Abram and his seed.

Now look at Deuteronomy 7:1: “When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land, whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou.”

Here these people are named again. God said, “I’m going to cast them out. Abram, your seed is going to get all this land. I’m going to destroy these people.” In Joshua 3:10, Joshua said, “Hereby you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites.” God was going to destroy them and drive them out.

God did exactly that. Joshua 24:11 says, “And he tells Israel, You went over Jordan and came into Jericho and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, and here’s what God said, and I delivered them into your hand.” God did it. God delivered them just as He said He would.

Nehemiah 9:8, speaking about Abram, says, “And found his heart faithful before thee, and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words, for thou art righteous.”

Now I want to ask you a question. You have seen where God says, “I’m going to destroy all these nations. I’m going to give their land to Abram and his seed.” Who were these people? From whom did they descend? Obviously, these were very, very wicked people. Let me answer that for you: all of these nations descended from a godly man.

This man was so godly that God listed him among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. Hebrews 11:7 says, “By faith, Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 1 Chronicles chapter 1, beginning with verse 8, says: "The sons of Ham, Cush, Mizraim, Put, Canaan. The sons of Cush, Sheba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah, Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be mighty upon the earth. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, of whom came the Philistines, and Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Zidon his firstborn, and Heth, the Jebusite also, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite, and the Hivite, and the Archite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite."

All of these whom God destroyed were from the sons and grandchildren of godly Noah. Isn't that amazing?

The Ordination to Eternal Life (Acts 13:48)

Acts 13:48 says, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. Here it is. And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Arthur W. Pink said concerning this verse, "Every artifice of human ingenuity has been employed to blunt the sharp edge of this scripture and to explain away the obvious meaning of these words. But it has been employed in vain, though nothing will ever be able to reconcile this and similar passages to the mind of natural man. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.'"

Pink then says, "Here we learn four things: that believing is the consequence and not the cause of God's decree. God did not save us because we first believed. We believed because God decreed that we would be saved.

"Second, that a limited number only are ordained to eternal life. For if all men without exception were thus ordained by God, then the words 'as many as' are a meaningless qualification. Third, that this ordination of God is not to mere external privileges, but to eternal life, not to service, but to salvation itself. Fourth, that all, 'as many as,' and not one less, who are thus ordained by God to eternal life will most certainly believe."

Spurgeon says, “Attempts have been made to prove that these words do not teach predestination, but these attempts so clearly do violence to the language that I shall not waste my time in answering them. I read, ‘as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,’ and I shall not twist the text but shall glorify the grace of God by ascribing to that grace the faith of every man. Is it not God who gives the disposition to believe? If men are disposed to have eternal life, does not He in every case dispose them? Is it wrong for God to give grace? If it be right for Him to give it, is it wrong for Him to purpose to give it? Would you have Him give it by accident? If it is right for Him to purpose to give grace today, it was right for Him to purpose to give it before today, and since He changes not, from eternity.” That is very true.

Do I desire that my loved ones should be saved? Of course I do. Shall I use the means that God has ordained to reach them? Of

course I shall. It is my duty, my obligation, and my responsibility. But as much as it is my duty, obligation, and responsibility, I still cannot save them.

Practical Applications: Witness and Submission to God's Will

Salvation is of the Lord. He must save them. I should fulfill my obligations, duties, and responsibility to the best of my ability, trusting in God, exercising faith in Him, and leaving the consequences in His hands. He alone can save. He alone can bless the means. He alone can make the means effectual.

The only reason that God should save my wife, my children, or anybody is because of His own mercy and grace, which He has in the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. The Bible says in Ephesians 1:3 that in Christ Jesus we have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. If anybody is saved, it is because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 3. I want to show you what I am going to call one of the greatest evangelical witnesses that you can have. In this passage, it happens to be a witness from a godly wife to an ungodly husband, but I am going to reverse it in just a moment. Here is the situation: two people are married, God saves the wife, and the husband is unsaved. The wife attempts to witness to her husband, but he refuses to hear and refuses to listen.

I have known people like that. I have been asked to come and talk to a lost husband by a godly wife, and as I was walking in the front door, the husband was running out the back door. It is the absolute truth. God did save him later. Then he started running to me, but he had actually run away from me; he did not want to hear it. Now watch what God says.

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word,” that is, they are not willing to listen, “they also may without the word be won, how, by the conduct of the wives, while they behold your chaste conduct coupled with fear, whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting

of the hair, or wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in old time the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." Here is a woman who is saved, but her husband will not listen to the preaching of the Gospel.

He does not want anybody witnessing to him. God said, "All right, listen. Here is the thing you do, wife: you just live a holy, godly, consistent, and constant life before him. You let him see the truth of the gospel in your life. You are witnessing to him not with words, but your life is well." Realize that this deals with a lost husband and a saved wife, but you can reverse the situation; it is still the same. God is not going to require the husband to be in submission and subjection to the wife, but He will say that the husband is to live that consistent and godly life in order to witness and testify to the wife.

I know of one individual in particular who married a woman apart from his father's will. The woman was unsaved, and the young man was saved. He wrote me and asked, "What can I do? I mean, she's given me a living hell on earth." I said, "You should have listened to your father. But since you did not, the only thing you can do, if she will not listen to your preaching and witnessing, is live that godly, holy life before her."

Do you realize that in less than a year God had saved her, and now she is just as zealous in the faith as he is? This is one of the greatest means of witnessing that you can have. When people see that you are consistent, constant in obedience, and holy, they cannot deny or discount a holy, godly life. Obviously, it is real; it is true.

Here is my third application. This one is difficult, but I want you to listen to me. I believe that when judgment day comes and we stand before God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Whatever happens to our spouses, children, grandchildren, and loved ones will be to His honor and glory. It may be hard, but it is still true: if our children, grandchildren, and loved ones are condemned, we will stand with Christ against them. We will see as we have never seen and know assuredly that the Judge of all the earth does right. He is God, He is sovereign, and we will bow to Him and exalt His righteousness and justice.

If it pleases God to save an entire family, which He often does, that will redound to His honor and glory. If God is pleased to save only one member of an entire family, that will still redound to His honor and glory.

I have tried to be honest with Scripture. I am a husband and a father, and I desire my family to worship only the Lord Jesus Christ. But I have contemplated the reality: What if some of my children are never saved? I desire them to be saved. I teach them, preach to them, and pray for them. Yet there is the possibility that they may never be. In that instance, I want the attitude of godly Job, who lost all ten of his children at one time, bowed and worshiped, and said, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

It is our responsibility to do whatever we can to reach our unsaved loved ones, but only God can save them and make it real. We must fulfill our responsibility to the best of our abilities, trust God to work it out, and bow to Him in whatever He does.

Father, we ask that You would help us, teach us, and build us up in the most holy faith. Enable us to contemplate this issue and be faithful to our loved ones in witnessing and in living a holy, godly life before them. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, amen.

CHAPTER 24

Remember Lot And His Wife

February 11, 2016

Introduction: The Command to Remember Lot and His Wife

In 2 Peter 2:6–8 we read: “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds).”

There is a specific command in Scripture to remember Lot’s wife. Our Lord said in Luke 17:32, “Remember Lot’s wife.” When we think of Lot’s wife, we should automatically think of Lot. He was her head, and he certainly was responsible for her. Each man must die for his own sins, and Lot’s wife was responsible for her action. The messengers of the Lord told her not to look back, and she purposely and deliberately looked back. Lot did not sin for her.

Yet, on the other hand, Lot was also responsible for her—responsible for her education, her environment, and her direction as well.

She escaped Sodom, so to speak, just by the skin of her teeth, yet Sodom was in her. She looked back, she longed, and she loved that which God absolutely hated. The command to remember Lot's wife is peculiar to Luke, and at the same time it is a most searching word for everyone whose face and heart are not steadily fixed upon the Lord. You would think that Lot's wife would have made it. She had gotten out of Sodom and out of all that judgment, and yet she looked back.

Her heart was still in the city. Her being turned into a monument of stone signified the truth of God's Word, which she absolutely hated and despised; therefore God made her a monument of His displeasure. We cannot look back out of curiosity and covetousness. Our Lord made it plain in Luke 9:62: "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Many people do not understand that simple illustration.

It does not matter whether you are plowing with a mule or a tractor. If you are going to lay off straight rows, you must look far ahead, pick out a tree or stump, point the mule or tractor toward it, and never take your eyes off it until the first row is finished. If you look back, you will soon have rows like this. Thus our Lord said that he who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

When we read 2 Peter 2:6-8, God is not simply telling us to remember Lot, as He did in Luke 17:32 when He said, "Remember Lot's wife." In 2 Peter 2, He tells us why we should remember Lot. Lot was one believer who truly and royally messed up his life.

Lot's Righteousness and Tormented Life

Let me point out that if the Bible did not specifically say Lot was a righteous man, I would have assumed—and probably stated—that he was either a hypocrite or an unbeliever. Yet Scripture tells us as

a fact that he was indeed righteous. He may have been righteous, but according to our text, he obviously lived a very tormented life.

So the question must be asked: Why? What kept him in Sodom? Why did he stay there and put up with such filth and wickedness? The Lord's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain, was an example of His justice and wrath. According to Scripture, they are an example to all who live ungodly and disobediently. Second Peter 2:6 says, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly." Anyone who wants to live an ungodly, disobedient, lawless life should look to Sodom and Gomorrah. We must understand that this is indeed an example to those who would live an ungodly life. Obviously, Lot knew about the perversion and wickedness in Sodom and Gomorrah.

In fact, he had to protect the angels in Genesis chapter 19, or at least he attempted to protect them until the Sodomites turned upon him. So you have to ask the question, why was he there? You have to ask how could he stay and why did he stay?

God often sends warnings to people. He warns us in numerous ways. The recent floods, the recent droughts, or the recent wildfires—just read Amos chapter 4. God sends plagues, God sends locusts, God sends drought, God sends floods. And when we refuse to heed His warnings, then the next judgment intensifies, intensifies until He gets our attention. If He doesn't get our attention in Amos chapter 4, He said, "Prepare to meet thy God." In other words, He will just simply take us out.

In Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 7, there is one of the most famous warnings that was heeded. The Bible says, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." God warned Noah. Noah listened, Noah obeyed, he heeded God's warning. Noah listened to the warning. Lot did not. Likewise, multitudes today refuse to hear and to heed God's warnings.

In Genesis chapter 14, beginning with verse 8, there is a clear warning that God had given unto Lot: "And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar); and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram."

There was a war. All the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were captured. The goods were confiscated, all the victuals, the Bible says, and even Lot. He was taken, obviously along with his possessions as well. Then Abram armed 318 trained servants that he had in his own house, and he got with Aner and Eshcol, and they went and rescued Lot and all the people and all the goods. They brought everything back to the king of Sodom and Gomorrah and gave them unto him.

Now God in this instance allowed Lot to be rescued. I think if I had been alive back then, living in Sodom, and had been captured and taken prisoner with everything that I had, and then God in His sovereign providence allowed me to be rescued with everything that I owned, I would start thinking, “Am I in the wrong place? Maybe I shouldn't be living here. Maybe I should be thinking about moving or getting out of harm's way, because after all, if it happened one time, it could at least happen again.”

That thought may have entered Lot's mind. I don't know whether it did or not. The Bible does not say. But one thing we do know: if that thought did enter into Lot's mind, he dismissed it, because he continued to live in Sodom. He continued to live there until the Lord destroyed it and even the cities of the plain.

It is true that God delivered Lot out of Sodom. Yet while he lived, he remained in Sodom. Living in Sodom did not and could not strengthen him in his faith. It could not and did not enable him to live a more godly life. It did not and could not lead to his family learning to resist evil and wickedness. We are going to see that it literally destroyed him and his family.

Hold the book of Genesis; we will be coming back there. But before we get there, I want us to look at these verses in detail. Notice 2 Peter chapter 2 and verse 7: “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” Let me call your attention to several truths in verses 7 and 8.

First, we are told that Lot was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. We must consider the word “vexed.” The Greek word literally indicates oppression and vexation. It means to tire down, exhaust, afflict, oppress, make trouble for, and treat roughly. Here this man Lot was literally exhausted. He was worn down. He was consistently and constantly being beaten down, worn out, and oppressed. Just stop and think. Not only physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I am sure that all of this oppression could not have been conducive to physical health, and it certainly was not conducive to spiritual health. The Bible uses the word “vexed” here to describe his oppression.

The Meaning of 'Vexed' and the Filthy Conduct of the Wicked

But notice secondly, in verse 7: “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” The word “filthy” refers to unbridled lust; to excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, and insolence. Now, stop and think about this. I am going to show you the Scripture in just a moment. The Sodomites were not only perverted; they were arrogant and insolent in their perversions as well. They were totally unashamed and gloried in all that they did.

Look in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 3. God is about to condemn Judah and Jerusalem and show them what their attitude and disposition were likened unto. Notice Isaiah 3:8: “For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and

their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory." Now look what God says: "The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not."

"Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves." God says that in their rebellion Judah and Jerusalem became exactly like Sodom. Notice what He said in verse 9: "they declare their sin, they hide it not." In other words, they were not ashamed. They were glad and happy; they declared their own perversion openly and shamelessly. Nothing bothered them, and they were concerned with nothing except their own gratification. They lived for themselves. It is no different today.

Now look back at 2 Peter 2:7: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." The word "conversation" here refers to their manner of life—their conduct, behavior, and deportment. This is how they lived and what they lived for. Thus, He said, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conduct or behavior or deportment of the wicked."

Fourthly, you have to consider the word "wicked." It refers to one who breaks out against the restraints of law to gratify his own lust. This individual is not only lawless and perverted; he is absolutely wicked. Put these thoughts together with verse 7: Lot was vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked. He was surrounded by people whose lives were thoroughly unbridled and lustful, and whose attitude was the epitome of arrogance and insolence. This was how they lived every day. They did not change, they did not want to change, and they flaunted their wickedness in his face. Such oppression was a constant factor upon Lot. Now, look in verse 8.

For that righteous man—notice that verse 7 calls him just, while verse 8 calls him righteous—dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. Here was a righteous man, a just man, dwelling among the wicked. He was in their circle and in their sphere of influence. What was the result? In seeing and hearing, he vexed his righteous soul from day to day.

"Seeing" includes looking and even glancing. There is a difference between looking and glancing. I have seen things that I did not intend to see, that I did not want to see. You just have to look, you glance, and there it is. The only thing you can do is turn your head. Lot did not necessarily stare, nor was he looking to see, but even if he glanced, even if he looked around, he could not help but see.

He knew what was happening. He knew what was going on. He saw it, and yet he stayed. So you have to ask yourself, why did he stay after seeing what he saw? The Bible says, "in seeing and hearing." Lot was no eavesdropper. He did not have to eavesdrop, so to speak. He could not escape the sights or the sounds. In seeing and hearing, the Bible says, he vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.

Now, if you look in verse 7 again: "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked." I told you what the word "vexed" meant there. When you look in verse 8, the word "vexed" is a totally different word. It literally means to question by applying torture, to be harassed, to be distressed, to be vexed with grievous pains of body or mind. He was literally in turmoil. He was tormented day after day.

Let me put this in good South Georgia lingo for you: literally, what verses 7 and 8 are telling us is that Lot's life was a living hell on earth. And I want you to note that it was a living hell from day to day. There was no let-up. There was no easement. It was the same every day. So my question is this: Why would a righteous man, why would a just man, stay in that type of environment? Why would he want to live in a place like that? What would hold him, what would keep him there in a living torment and in a putrid hell?

Adam Clarke, in his commentary, stated that from the time of Lot's departure from Abram, which we will look at in Genesis 14, in all probability he lived in Sodom for a minimum of 20 years.

What would compel a man to live in a living hell for 20 to 30 or 40 years? It never let up. It was the same every day: torment, torture, oppression, harassment. What would make a man put up with that? I am going to give you two thoughts from Scripture, only

two points. I am going to show you what I genuinely believe kept Lot in Sodom. By the way, it is what keeps an awful lot of men and women today in environments where they should not even be. First of all, what kept Lot in Sodom? Here is the first answer: financial considerations.

Why Did Lot Stay? Financial Considerations

He was there for the money. I believe that, first and foremost, Lot's life is a demonstration of the truth of 1 Timothy 6:10. In that passage, the Word of God says, "For the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

Now, Lot, as far as I know, did not err from the faith in the sense that he certainly did not deny the Lord. He did not deny His Word. But he did indeed pierce himself through with a multitude of sorrows.

In Genesis chapter 13, we see the financial considerations: "And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the Lord. And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me."

Abram said to Lot, “If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.” Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom

and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

You cannot help but see the absolute graciousness of Abram. It is true that God had given Abram the land, yet Abram was the one who said, "There's a problem between your herdmen and my herdmen. I don't want any problem between you and me. The whole land is before us. Separate yourself. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." In other words, Abram gave Lot the absolute choice. It was all Lot's decision. The Bible says that Lot lifted up his eyes and saw the plain of Jordan. What motivated Lot to choose the plain of Jordan?

Genesis 13:5 says, "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together." Lot was just as rich as Abram. He had plenty; he was no slacker. Verses 10 and 12 say, "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. And Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom." So why did he choose the plain of Jordan?

Why did Lot pitch his tent toward Sodom? Because he had cattle, and the plain of Jordan was wonderful for grazing. It was a financial consideration: he could raise more cattle, feed them more cheaply, and make more money. The plain of Jordan and pitching his tent toward Sodom may have been great for cattle, but it was not good for raising children. Basically, Lot was choosing cattle over a family.

The Bible says that he pitched his tents for himself, his servants, his shepherds, and his herdmen. Those tents either reached unto Sodom or pointed in that direction. Afterwards, he dwelt in Sodom. Look, if you would, in verse 12: "Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom." That was his goal. He may have inched that way and slowly moved that way, but that was his goal.

In the beginning, Lot may not have considered that the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked sinners exceedingly. You and I understand that all men are sinners, but some are far more vile and wicked than others. The men of Sodom and Gomorrah were exceeding sinners; they were magnificent sinners, sinners of the first magnitude. They were impudent, daring sinners who flaunted their sins.

It is impossible, in one sense of the word, to avoid sinners. On the other hand, there are some sinners that must absolutely be avoided. The Apostle Paul told his brethren, "Beware of Alexander the coppersmith, for he did me much evil." Beware of Hymenaeus and Philetus. There were notorious sinners of whom he said, "Don't have anything to do with them. Stay away from them. Don't go around them."

Now turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Let me show you what the Apostle Paul taught there. Beginning with verse 9, he says: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators." Yet the next verse says: "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world." The only way to get away from sinners altogether would be to go out of the world—even from the wicked sinners, the extortioners, the idolaters, and the fornicators. I have no problem with this. But I have known Christians who would not shop at a certain grocery store,

Some people will not buy a certain brand of clothing or automobile because, they say, the company supports or promotes abortion, sodomy, or something similar. That may be true, and thankfully you may be boycotting them, but you probably do not realize that the companies from which you are buying do exactly

the same thing. You cannot get away from sinners without going out of the world. It is impossible.

But Paul says in verse 11, “But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” You want to boycott somebody? Paul tells you whom to boycott: those who profess to be Christians but are living like the devil, in ungodly and disobedient lives. If I have a choice to buy an automobile from a man who professes to be a Christian but is a whoremonger and a thief, or from an out-and-out pagan whom I know is an idolater and possibly a thief, God says I am to buy from the pagan. I am to avoid the man who professes to be a Christian while living such an ungodly, wicked life.

The question you must ask yourself concerning Lot, who was living in Sodom, is this: How much can one endure just for profit? Why do we place material things above health, peace, and happiness? I know people who have ruined their health working in certain positions and for certain companies. Is it worth it? The answer is no. Their lives are in absolute turmoil; they are oppressed and afflicted, yet they continue simply for money's sake.

Our Lord asks in Matthew 6:25, “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” Of course it is. He also asks in Luke 9:25, “For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” All the money in the bank will not restore your health or buy you happiness. If you are unusable for God in His kingdom, you have not been advantaged anything in your quest for money. So you have to consider.

If you talk about Lot, do you realize that the only thing he is remembered for in Scripture is his residence in Sodom and his incest with his two daughters, who produced people contrary to God and contrary to God's people? That's the only thing he is remembered for. Here is Lot, a righteous and just man, remembered only for living in Sodom and committing incest with his two daughters.

Financial considerations kept him in Sodom. But here is a second thing that kept him there: family connections. I have known people who have lived in a hell on earth because of family connections. When you think about the mafia, you think about family. People put up with a lot of things simply for family's sake.

Have you ever considered that nothing is said in the Bible about Lot's wife until Genesis 19, and there she is connected to Sodom? Evidently, Lot was single until he got to Sodom.

Why Did Lot Stay? Family Connections

Genesis 12:4-5 says, "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." Sarai is mentioned, and the souls gathered in Haran are mentioned, but there is no mention of Lot's wife. Evidently, Lot was single at this particular time.

Genesis 13:5-6 says, "And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together." Again, only Lot is mentioned.

Genesis 14:12 says, "And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed." Nothing is said about his wife; they took Lot and his goods. When Abram rescued him, verse 16 says, "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." Again, nothing is said about Lot's wife.

You do not read about Lot's wife until Genesis 19. Before considering what this teaches about her, notice the first two verses of that chapter. They have nothing to do right now with Lot's wife, but they tell us much about Lot himself. Here is my question, and I am going to answer it for you.

Is it possible that Lot married a woman of Sodom? Look in Genesis 19:1: “And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.”

You know the story, but note that Lot, in verse 1, is sitting in the gate of Sodom. The gates in the Bible always speak of authority and power. It was the elders, rulers, judges, and officers who sat in the gate. So here is the question: Is it possible that Lot was a civil ruler in Sodom? Did he hold an office? He would have been a well-respected man because of his immense wealth. There is no two ways about that. It is possible that he may have held an office in Sodom.

You remember when the Bible said, “and he pitched his tents towards Sodom”? Look at verse 2: “And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house.” The word “house” here indicates a dwelling, a permanent structure. He no longer lives in tents; he lives in a house in the city.

One commentator suggested that Lot had married a woman of Sodom. He wrote: “It is probable that he, Lot, was a single man when he parted from Abram, and therefore he married a woman of Sodom. He has in that case fallen into the snare of matching, or at all events mingling with the ungodly. This was the damning sin of the antediluvians. And their country was as the garden of the Lord, but the beauty of the landscape and the superabundance of the luxury it afforded did not abate the sinful disposition of the inhabitants. Their moral corruption only broke forth into greater vileness of lust and more daring defiance of heaven. They sinned exceedingly, and before the Lord, Lot had fallen into the very vortex of vice and blasphemy.”

There is a possibility, as one author stated, that Lot was in Sodom for 20 years. Personally, I think he was in Sodom longer than that, and I am going to show you why.

Look in your Bibles at Genesis 19:12. The angels are talking to Lot, hastening him to get out of the city: "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

A few commentators say that Lot had only two daughters, and that these daughters were betrothed, or, as we would say, engaged. But in Bible times, if someone was betrothed, that person was considered married, although the couple had not come together as husband and wife. It was surely a marriage; it simply had not been consummated at that particular time. That is a possibility. However, I believe Lot and his wife had more than two daughters. How can I say that?

When Abraham was interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain, he said to the Lord, "Lord, will you destroy the righteous with the wicked? Far be that from you. If I find 50 righteous there, will you spare it?" The Lord said, "Yes, I'll spare it for 50's sake." Abraham then got Him to 40, then to 30, then to 20, and finally to 10. Why did he stop when he got to 10? Why did he not keep going to 5?

I believe he stopped at 10 because he knew there were 10 family members in Lot's house, and he believed that would be sufficient to save the cities. But it was not.

Look, please, in verse 12. The angel asked, “And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.” Then, “And Lot went out.”

Notice that he left his house and went out and spoke unto his sons-in-law—that is plural—which married his daughters—that is plural—and said, “Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city.” But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law—that is plural.

Now verse 15 says, “And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here.” Notice the phrase, “which are here.” We do not care about those others now; they will not listen. But take the ones that are here. It is imperative that you get out now. This indicates, obviously, that he had more than two daughters.

The Consequences: Loss of Everything

What would keep a man living in a state of hell on earth for 20 to 30 years? There are only two things: a financial consideration and a family connection. If Lot moved to Sodom for financial considerations, and lived there because of family connections, how much did he lose when God judged Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain? He lost it all. He lost all his cattle, everything, and his family. The only two who got out were his two daughters.

Look in your Bibles to 2 Peter 2, the text that we began with. In verse 6, he is talking about condemning Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes and overthrowing them. Then look at verse 7: “And delivered just Lot.” We know that his two daughters got out, but there is no mention of them. We know that his wife initially got out but was turned into a pillar of salt, and there is no mention of her. The only one mentioned as being just and righteous was Lot.

If Lot did marry a woman of Sodom, which in all probability he did, that would account for what she did. When the angel said, “Don’t look back,” why did she look back? Because that was her

family, her fortune, and her home. Everything she had ever known was there. Her disobedience cost her her life. The Bible says in Genesis 19:26, "But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." She became a monument to God's displeasure because she looked back.

Let me make a couple of applications. God does not simply say, "Remember Lot," just as He said, "Remember Lot's wife." But you cannot help thinking of Lot when you think of his wife. In 2 Peter 2:6-8, He tells us why we should remember Lot. First, it does matter whom you marry. Remember 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, where God forbids a believer to marry an unbeliever. It does matter.

Applications for Believers Today

I have known believers who married unbelievers, and their life became basically a living hell on earth, yet they put up with it. I have known individuals who professed to be saved just to marry a Christian woman or man, then reverted after marriage to their hellish living and disobedient ways. Second, it matters where you live. If you want to be obedient, holy, and godly, why not live around people who believe as you do and will encourage and help you? I am not condemning people who live in the places I am about to suggest, but I do not want to live there. I would live there if God sent me there. But who in his right mind would want to live in Las Vegas, New York City, or Atlanta, Georgia?

I have no desire to live in those places. I am not saying that everybody who lives in them is wicked and wrong, but those places are not conducive to godliness and obedient living, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were not conducive to Lot's obedience and godliness.

Thirdly, children are not cattle. They must be raised, educated, and taught. What is great for cattle and what is great for making money may not necessarily be great for raising children. Our children will grow up and learn from us our habits and our ways.

Fourthly, we must count the cost of following Jesus Christ. If we live obedient lives, in all probability we will suffer. The Scripture says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer

persecution." However, the cost of following Christ is far greater and immeasurably different from serving and living for ourselves. Our Lord said in Mark 8:35, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." So obviously there is a difference.

We can do as the Sodomites and the people of Gomorrah did: party and do what we want now and lose everything. Or we can obey God and have everything. We must count the cost. There will be a cost for living obediently, and there will be a cost for living disobediently. That is certain.

Fifthly, we need to have our minds made up in advance as to whom we will serve, obey, and follow. Stop and think about this. When God sent Jonah to Nineveh, what did Jonah preach? "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." God gave those people forty days.

How long did Lot and his family have? They came that night before the sun was up. "Get out. Get out." You may not have but seconds. You may not have but a split moment. You better know in advance who you're going to serve and who you're going to worship, and you better make your choice now. As Joshua said in Joshua 24:15 to those Israelites, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Choose you this day. Make up your mind.

Our Lord does not tell us simply to remember Lot, as He said, "Remember Lot's wife." He tells us why we should remember Lot. Financial considerations and family connections should never keep us from an obedient, godly, and holy life. What did our Lord say? "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." So we need to make up our mind in advance and remember Lot and his wife.

Let's pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask You for Your grace, for Your mercy, for Your goodness and kindness in our lives. Help us to remember Lot, and to make sure that our lives are

not fashioned after him. May we remember Abram, the friend of God, the father of the faith, and follow in his steps. May we follow our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our great example. And Lord, may we live holily and godly and obediently. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 25

Walking With The Lord - Part 11 - Walking Accurately

May 17, 2016

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 5:15-33 (KJV)

Introduction: The Call to Walk Accurately

> See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
>
> And be not drunk with wine, wherein it is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. Speak unto yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own

husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself and the wife see that she reverence the husband.

Walking Accurately

We have seen what it means to walk before the Lord, to walk in faith, to walk worthily, to walk differently, to walk in love, and to walk in light. Now we come to the truth that God commends us to walk accurately. In verse 15, the Apostle says, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.” The word “see” is the Greek word blepō, which literally is a verb and simply means “to see.” However, it is translated in our Bibles as “take heed” twelve times. It can also mean “beware” or “beware of.” Thus, the Apostle is saying, “Take heed then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise.”

The Meaning of Walking Circumspectly

The Greek word for “circumspectly” is akribōs. It means literally to walk diligently, to walk exactly, to walk accurately, and to walk circumspectly. Our English word “circumspectly” is from the Latin word circumspectio. It signifies looking around, being aware of your surroundings, using caution, avoiding danger, and making sure that your enemies do not surprise you or come too nigh. It also means using every possible means to secure your interests by

lawful means. The word “circumspect,” then, carries that significance.

What the Apostle is telling us in verse 15 is that we who have received the truth must be careful of our conduct. We must walk by the rule which God has given to us in every situation and in every circumstance. We must make sure that we exemplify Biblical principles in our lives. For the child of God, it is not sufficient for you and me simply to claim the promises of God. We must live by the precepts and the principles in the Word of God as well. We must live our lives in such a way that our enemies may never say that our doctrines and our lives are unholy and empty.

Verse 15 is a warning, a “take heed” verse. The Apostle is telling us that we must take heed that we walk accurately. There is no need to take heed in heaven, because everything is perfect there. But while we are on earth, there is a great deal of which we must take heed and beware. We have to beware of every situation.

Remember the truth that the Apostle Paul enunciated in Galatians 6 and verse 16: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy upon the Israel of God.” The word “rule” there is the Greek word “kanōn.” It is where we get our English word “canon,” C-A-N-O-N, not C-A-N-N-O-N, the kind that shoots. We speak of the Old Testament canon, the New Testament canon, or the canon of Scripture.

The word “kanōn” literally means a measuring stick, measuring rod, or what we would call a yardstick. The Apostle is saying, then, peace be upon those who walk according to this rule, and he tells you who the Israel of God is: those who walk according to this rule, that is, the Scripture. Scripture is indeed our rule for faith.

Interestingly, when he tells us to take heed, he gives a negative and a positive. He says, “Take heed then,” or, “See then that ye walk circumspectly,” or accurately. Here is the negative: “not as fools, but as wise.” We are not to walk as fools. Fools do not walk accurately.

The Negative and Positive: Not Fools but Wise

I could multiply Scriptures on the subject of fools, but let me quote some. Proverbs 1 and verse 7 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and knowledge.” What is a fool? Someone who will not listen, hear, or heed. Proverbs 1 and verse 22 says, “How long then, you simple ones, would you love simplicity? And the scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge.” Again, fools hate knowledge. Proverbs 13 and verse 19 says, “The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination for fools to depart from evil.” A fool is someone who will not listen, will not learn, and will not depart from evil.

He is going to do what he wants to do regardless. Proverbs 13:20 says, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.” If we want to be wise, we need to walk with wise men. If we want to be destroyed, we need to walk with fools. Proverbs 14:8 says, “The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his ways, but the folly of fools is deceit.” Then, in Proverbs 14:9, the Bible says, “Fools make a mock at sin.” But among the righteous there is favor. So fools make a mockery even of sin.

When he tells us in verse 15, “See then that ye walk circumspectly,” or accurately, “not as fools, but as wise,” the word for “fools” is the simple Greek word asophos. It simply means foolish or unwise. The Greek word for “wise” is sophos. Asophos and sophos sound alike, and they are exactly alike except that the word for fool has an alpha, or an “A,” in front of it. That always negates the word. Thus, you have someone who is a fool, someone who is unwise, and someone who is wise.

The word “wise” refers to someone who is skilled, someone who is an expert in knowledge. Hold Ephesians 5, but look in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 5. In verses 13 and 14, the Apostle describes a wise man without even using the word “wise.” Hebrews 5:13 says, “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.” Notice the word “unskillful.” Verse 14 says, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to

discern both good and evil." A foolish man is unskillful; he is unwise. He does not have his senses exercised to discern good and evil. The Word of God tells us that we are not to walk as fools, but as wise.

Romans 16:19 says, "For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf." Then the Apostle says, "But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." He wants us wise to that which is good and simple, or naive, concerning evil. Just stop and think about that. How many of

Would we not much rather have lived our lives without hearing some things and knowing some things? We can still be simple, or naive, in that sense of the word. The point I am trying to make is this: when Paul says in Romans 16:19, "But I would have you wise concerning that which is good," the word "wise" in Romans 16:19 is exactly the same word found in Ephesians 5:15. So God wants us to be wise and not foolish.

Before I leave this thought, I want to point out that many Greek words are brought directly from the Greek language into English. For instance, our English word "deacon" comes straight from the Greek word "diakonos." It is spelled a little differently, but the word is transliterated and not translated because "deacon" simply means a servant. Every hospital just about has a cardiac unit. "Kardia" is the Greek word for heart, and many of our medical terms come straight from the Greek as well.

Everyone has heard the word "sophomore." You have it in high school and in college. The word "sophomore" is made up of two Greek words: "sophos," which means wise, and "mōros," which means foolish or moron. So a sophomore is nothing more than a wise fool or a wise moron. It is just that simple. When our Lord says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," our Lord does not want us to be stupid or foolish. He wants us to be wise. In order to do that, we have to walk accurately.

How do we do this? Look in verse 16. He says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time

because the days are evil." How in the world do we redeem the time?

Redeeming the Time Because the Days Are Evil

The Greek word for "redeeming" is "exagorazō." That word is translated "redeem" four times in the New Testament, and it is used in reference to the redemption of Jesus Christ. But the word actually means to redeem by payment of a price, to recover from the power of another, to ransom, to buy off, or to buy up for oneself. So he tells us that we must redeem the time.

What does that mean? It means that we are to make wise and sacred use of our time, of every opportunity for doing well. The zeal that we have in doing that is what you and I would call the payment price, or the purchase money, that we would exercise in redeeming the time.

The Greek word for "time" is "kairos," and it refers to a time. But it also refers to what you and I would call a season or an opportunity. It is an opportune time, or the time is seasonal; it means it is right. We all understand that there are seasons of opportunity. For instance, a farmer understands that he harvests his crops in the fall. That is the harvest season. We do not usually harvest at any other time, except perhaps a garden in the spring. As far as crops are concerned, it is usually in the fall.

Although we can talk about seasons in that sense, we also have to understand that each of us has a limited time on this earth. Our life is seasonal. We can use this in reference to our lifespan. I was raised on a farm, and many of you were, or at least were around farmers. You have all used this illustration: "Let's make hay while the sun shines," understanding that you cannot make hay when it is raining.

That is exactly what our Lord is talking about here. In John 9:4 He said, "I must work the work of him who has sent me while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." In this context, day is life and night is death.

We cannot go beyond our life span. Every one of us wishes we could go back and relive our lives, knowing what we know now.

But we cannot. So we understand that there has to be a redeeming of the time.

Now, he tells us why: “because the days are evil.” Let me explain the word “evil.” The Greek word there is “ponēros.” It is translated “evil” in our Bibles 51 times. It is translated “wicked” 10 times, “wicked” 1, 6 times, and “evil things” 2 times. So, when he says, “redeeming the time because the days are evil,” the word “evil” could refer to what you and I would call trials, tribulations, perils, pains, annoyances, and troubles. But in an ethical sense, it always refers to that which is bad and evil.

You remember our Lord taught us to pray in Matthew 6:13, “And lead us not into temptation, but what? Deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.” So how do we redeem the time because the days are evil? Moses, the man of God, answers that question for us in Psalm 90. He says, “The days of our years are three score years and 10,” seventy. “And if by reason of strength they be four score years,” eighty, “yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

Some die before seventy; the average is seventy. Some live beyond seventy, making it into their eighties, and some into their nineties. A few hardy souls make it past a hundred. I showed Alice a little black lady on the Internet who had just set a new world record in the hundred-yard dash for her age group. She was one hundred years old. From eighty to one hundred, she set a new world record; and there she was doing push-ups and sit-ups, one hundred years old.

I thought, my goodness, she can outdo me. And I'm 30 years younger, but I mean, you know, I simply said, some make it. I never will forget, I was talking to a fellow who was in his 80s years ago, and he was a very wealthy man. He said to me, and I've never forgotten it, "It's too sad that when you're old enough to have it, there's not enough strength to enjoy it." That's basically true. Look at all the wisdom we have, things that we know how to do, but we just can't do them anymore. That's what Moses is talking about.

He says, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger, even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath?" In light of this fact, he says, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." When Moses says "teach us to number our days," he's not saying, Give me a mathematical calculation as to how long you think we're going to live. He just told us we're going to make it to 70 or 80 by God's grace if we live a normal average life. Who knows how old we will be before we die? If he is not telling us a mathematical calculation, what is he saying? He is saying, We need to make the most of each day that we have.

You do not have yesterday. You cannot go back and undo anything that has been done except the repentance. That's all. You do not have tomorrow. Tomorrow has not yet come. The only day that you have is right now. So make use of this day. Redeem this time by living godly, obediently, and holy; by walking accurately; by bringing your life into conformity to the rule, principle, and precept of Scripture. That's how you redeem the time.

Paul reiterates this in Ephesians chapter 5: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Then he says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, understanding what the will of the Lord is." In other words, do not be moronic. Do not be a fool. If you are going to be wise, you must understand what the will of the Lord is. So my question would be this: Where do we understand God's will?

Understanding the Will of the Lord

The answer is from this book. You remember what David said in Psalm 119, verses 9 through 11? He asked, "Wherewithal shall the young man cleanse his way?" Here is the answer: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word, with my whole heart have I sought thee. O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Obviously, if we are going to redeem the time, walk accurately, and not walk as a fool, then we must walk according to God's Word by hiding His Word in our hearts.

Literally, verse 17 is a command. Paul is saying, "Stop being unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Ignorance of

our duty and neglect of our souls are evidences of the greatest folly. On the other hand, knowing God and His will is the best and truest wisdom.

In the rest of Ephesians, Paul gives us basic fundamentals. He does not give a detailed, exhaustive list of what it means to be wise or to redeem the time; rather, he addresses the most basic foundations, probably in the areas where you and I need this most. I could spend many messages explaining these verses, as I have done in times past when dealing with the family, but I will try to be concise. The question is: How do I walk accurately? So far, I know that walking accurately means I am not walking as a fool, I am redeeming the time, and I am understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Practical Aspects of Walking Accurately

How do we do this? First of all, in verse 18 He said, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." Notice the analogy here, which indicates both a comparison and a contrast. There are stated similarities between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit, and yet, at the same time, there are extreme differences. This could be an entire message, showing how being drunk and being filled with the Spirit are synonymous, and then showing how they could be absolutely different.

Interestingly, on the day of Pentecost, when Peter and all of those men were filled with the Spirit and began to preach and teach, they were accused of being drunk with new wine. Acts 2 says, "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, 'What meaneth this?' And others mocking said, 'These men are full of new wine.'" In other words, they were drunk.

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, 'Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.'" That is, nine in the morning.

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke.’”

They said the problem with these men was that they were drunk. No, Peter said, they were not drunk. Now, I want to give you two quotes, one from Albert Barnes and then one from John Gill. Both men are commenting on, “Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit.” Barnes will give you a negative and Gill a positive. Here is what Barnes says: “It is not improbable that in this verse”

There is an allusion to the orgies of Bacchus, or to the festival celebrated in honor of that heathen god. He was the god of wine, and during those festivals men and women regarded it as an acceptable act of worship to become intoxicated and, with wild songs and cries, to run through streets, fields, and vineyards. Bacchus was the god of wine; Bacchanalia was the festival, and he was honored with extreme drunkenness, revelry, fornication, and everything else. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," and this could refer to Bacchus, or simply to being drunk. But he says, "Be filled with the Spirit."

John Gill said that believers may be said to be filled with the Spirit as with wine, or instead of it, or in opposition to it, when the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which is compared to wine for its antiquity, purity, and refreshing nature. They are filled with the Spirit, have a comfortable sense of it, a firm persuasion of interest in it, and are delighted with the views of it, being, as it were, inebriated with it. They are filled with the Spirit in whom His grace is a well of living water, out of whose belly flow rivers of it, and who have a large measure of spiritual peace and joy, expressed in the following manner. That is walking in the Spirit.

Here is what the Apostle is teaching us: we are to walk accurately. If we are going to redeem the time, we must learn to walk in the Spirit. Lord willing, next Sunday will be the final message on what it means to walk in the Spirit. There is a lot of confusion today, even about being led by the Spirit. Obviously, he is saying that if we are going to walk accurately, we are going to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, which will be dealt with next week.

Notice verse 19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Secondly, if we walk accurately, our music, individually and corporately, will be biblical and scriptural. In verse 19, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" is the division of the book of Psalms. Some psalms are called psalms, some are called hymns, and some are called spiritual psalms. What he is talking about here is singing Scripture: speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

In fact, we have psalters at the house, and we have used those psalters over and over. He plays a lot of Psalms. Some of the Psalms are very easy: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God.” There is a song about it; that is what he is talking about singing. But notice what else he says in verse 19: “singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

In other words, we are not singing the world’s songs. We are singing the Lord’s songs. We are not listening to the junk of the world, and that is exactly what most of it is: junk. I stopped yesterday to fill the car with gas, and Alice went in to pay so I could pump the gas. The car next to me was blaring rap music. I did not even have my hearing aids in, and I was trying to signal to Alice that the pump was not working. She kept coming closer and closer. Finally, she got from here to Gary, and I said—I could not hear a word she was saying because of that filthy, wicked music next to me. Finally, the girl shut the door, and it became quieter until she got in and drove off.

I am not interested in hearing that stuff. The point is very simple: God’s people do not sing that stuff. We do not sing those worldly songs. We sing to the Lord.

Let me ask you a question: Have you ever sung to the Lord?

Everyone who knows me knows that I cannot sing or carry a tune in a bucket. But many times, when I am alone, I sing to the Lord. If I am off key, wonderful; I do not care, and He does not care, because the Bible says, "Make a joyful noise to the Lord." It may be noise, but that is all right. Sometimes I sing in the car, and Alice sits there and groans and bears it. That is all right too. This is what He is talking about: singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Albert Barnes gives this comment on verse 19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." He says, "In praise of the Lord or addressed to Him, singing is here meant as a direct and solemn act of worship, and should be considered such as really as prayer. In singing we should regard ourselves as speaking directly to God, and the words therefore should be spoken with a solemnity and all becoming such a direct address to the great Jehovah."

Isn't that amazing? Have you ever stopped to think of singing as worship? I am not just talking about corporate singing, but about the individual songs you sing to the Lord. It is worship. So, if we are going to walk accurately, we will walk in the Spirit and learn to sing the Psalms individually unto the Lord.

Now look at verse 20. Here is the third thing: if we are going to walk accurately, we will be continually giving thanks to our Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." When we fail to give thanks, as we often do, it demonstrates that we are truly ungrateful. It is our duty and obligation to be thankful to each other as well as to the Lord, particularly to the Lord. I am thankful for every gift I have ever received, and, when I have the opportunity, I thank the individual who gave it. But how many times do we receive gifts from God and never thank Him?

Our life, our health, our protection, our provision, and our preservation are all reasons for thanksgiving. He said, "In every thing giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father in the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ." People ask, "How can I give thanks when I have just lost my husband, my wife, or my child?" The answer is simple: you can give thanks unto God for the time He allowed you to have and enjoy them. Brother McCurry lost his wife Evelyn after sixty-seven years. That was very difficult and still is difficult. Gene and Norma had been married sixty years; another couple had been married fifty-nine years. There is so much to be thankful for. Even when a child is taken at a young age, we can still be thankful that the Lord allowed us to have that child. "In every thing give thanks," he says, "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus."

Giving thanks is also an act of worship. Second Samuel 22:50 says, "Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name." Here the giving of thanks and the singing of praises are joined together; both are worship. First Chronicles 16:8 says, "Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people." Giving thanks is done publicly.

First Chronicles 16:34-35 says, "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise." Here thanks and prayer go together, with petition begging God for salvation. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Hebrews 13:15 likewise says, "By him, that is, by Jesus Christ, therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." The book of Psalms is full of praise and thanksgiving unto God for His grace and mercy. We should not only sing the Psalms; we should use them to excite us to praise and thanksgiving.

If we are going to walk accurately, we are going to walk in the Spirit, sing unto the Lord, and give thanks unto the Lord. Fourthly, we are going to be walking in submission. He said, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Let me emphasize that: submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. There is no one who can walk independently, and no one who can

walk unsubmissively. The general principle is set down in verse 21: “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

Steve would have to submit to me when it comes to my teaching the Scripture. But I would have to submit to him when it came to anything mechanical, because I do not know anything mechanical. Listen to what John Calvin wrote: “God has bound us so strongly to each other that no man ought to endeavor to avoid subjection, and where love reigns, mutual services will be rendered. I do not accept even kings and governors, whose very authority is held for the service of the community. It is highly proper that all should be exhorted to be subject to each other in their turn.” There is a proper submission for everyone.

In 1 Corinthians 11, God gives us His established order. There is an orderly way that God has ordained for us to live, and that orderly way is based upon submission. Here God says, “But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”

Here is God, who is the absolute head, God the Father. Under Him is God the Son; under Him is man; and under him is the woman. You say, “I do not like that.” Well, I am sorry. That is the way God ordained it. That is the way God set it up. The woman is to be in submission to the man. But I have got news for you: when you read also in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, you will find that the man is nothing without the woman. Now I might be the head of my house, but I’m gonna tell

There are times I submit to Alice. I submit to her cooking and her housecleaning. I submit to her when she tells me what needs to be done around certain... because that's not my field. There is a proper submission to each one.

God has established this order. Someone says, "I think it's bad that the woman should be in submission to the man." I got news for you: it's not bad; it's good, because the man is to be in submission to Jesus Christ. Everyone is to be in submission. Jesus Christ Himself was not only in submission to His heavenly Father, but, as a child, Jesus Christ, who is God incarnate, was in

submission. He was just as much God when He was born of that virgin, in that stable and manger, as He was when He grew up.

Do you realize that in Luke chapter 2, when He was twelve, the family sought Him and found Him in the temple, hearing and answering questions from all those scribes? His mother said, "Son, we've sought thee sorrowing." And He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" Then verse 51 tells us, "And he went down with them," that is, Mary and Joseph, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. And His mother kept all these things in her heart."

Jesus Christ, who is God, was in submission to His creatures whom He created. They were His mother and father, and He submitted to them. There is nothing wrong with submission. It is God's orderly way.

In order to walk accurately in submission in every relation of life, we must recognize that one of the greatest tragedies in our day is rebellion evidenced in our daily lives. Our personal lives are a wreck, our families are devastated, our churches are hotbeds of antinomianism, and our government is in open defiance and rebellion against God, covenants, and men. It is everywhere you look. Nobody wants to be in submission.

In Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 through 24, Paul tells the wives, “Submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord.” He tells you why: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church and he's the savior of the body.” Verse 24 says, “Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.”

In other words, the wife is required to be in submission to her husband because the husband has been constituted the head. The husband represents Jesus Christ, and the wife represents the church. Just as the church is to be in submission to Jesus Christ in everything, so is the wife to be in submission to her husband. God has ordained the marital picture to be a picture of the redemption that we have in Jesus Christ.

“What about the husbands?” “Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” The

husband is to be in submission to Jesus Christ. It is easy for a wife to be in submission to a husband who loves her the way Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. It is just that simple. God requires the husbands to be in submission as well.

In chapter 6, verses 1–3: “Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother which is the first commandment of the promise. That it may be well with thee that thou mayest live long on the earth.” God requires children to be in submission to their parents. Isn’t that amazing? No one escapes submission. Each man has his own sphere of submission.

“Servants,” and you might as well, when you see the word “servants” here, go ahead and say it “slaves,” slaves. “Be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling and singleness of your heart as under Christ. Not with eye-service as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.” And you masters, do the same thing unto them.

"Forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in Heaven, neither is a respective person with Him." Note in this passage that God is no abolitionist. God demands that slaves be in subjection to their masters and serve them, not as men-pleasers, but as pleasing unto the Lord and doing the will of God. At the same time, He enjoins the masters to be in submission to Him. He reminds them, "Look, you have slaves. You have servants. Wonderful. You're my slave and you're my servant. You mistreat yours, I'll take care of you." Isn't that interesting? God is saying that they have a master as well, and He will regard them as they regard their servants.

The general meaning of this passage is simply this: Christianity does not break up the relations of life. It does not produce disorder, lawlessness, and insubordination. Rather, it conforms and confirms proper authority, and it truly lightens every just and proper yoke: the yoke of the child in submission, the wife in submission, the husband in submission, and even the yoke of slaves who are to be in submission.

The Whole Armor of God

Infidelity is that which destroys and disorganizes. Christianity does not do that. The only workable, sensible, and rational order is God's order; everything else devolves into chaos. Remember Proverbs 8:36, where our Lord said, “All they that hate me love death.” What’s wrong with individual lives? They love death. What’s wrong with families? They love death. What’s wrong with the church? They love death. What’s wrong with government societies? They love death. If we love life, we will follow God’s orderly way.

And fifthly, if we walk accurately, we walk in the whole armor of God. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may withstand the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may withstand in the evil day and stand. Stand therefore, girded with truth, wearing the breastplate of righteousness, and with feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, to quench all the fire darts of the wicked; take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching with perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

If we are going to walk accurately, we must walk with the armor of God. We cannot live without it. We have enemies who wish to destroy our souls and spirituality. He says, “Arm yourselves with the armor that I provided for you.” Since we only have a day to do this, it is daily.

Sixthly, if we walk accurately, we learn to pray for each other and God's preachers. He says, “and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all what? Saints.” Then Paul says, “and as for me,” you generally pray for everybody, “but specifically pray for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I'm an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak.” If we are going to walk

accurately, we learn to pray for each other and specifically for God's preachers.

I appreciate all prayers. But do you realize there are times that I appreciate prayers more than others? I really appreciate prayers when I'm in the den of lions. There are times far more dangerous, and preaching situations far more difficult, than others. This is what Paul is talking about. Paul says, “I want boldness to preach and declare the Word of God. Pray for me.” Remember that. He also says that if they want to know anything about him, he will send Tychicus, who can tell them everything they need to know.

How do we apply this? As Christians—not unbelievers—we may walk as fools or as wise. We can be morons or wise men. If we choose to walk as morons, we will bring God's chastisement and judgment upon us, as well as shame in our lives. If we choose to walk as wise men, then we know God's will. We walk accurately in that will, doing it and submitting to God and God alone.

Application: Examine Every Area of Life

The second application is kin to this: We must examine every area of our lives and each relationship to determine whether we are wise or foolish in that relationship. As Christians, we cannot say, “Well, we’re wrong in every area.” No, we’re not wrong in every area. There are some areas in which we are right, but some may be questionable. Examine those areas and ask, “What can I do to be more biblical, more godly, more holy, more obedient, more submissive, and more conformed to the Word of God?”

There are certain requests, certain petitions, that I usually pray every day. One is that the Lord would make me more holy, more godly, more obedient, more submissive, and more conformed to His Word.

You cannot walk accurately without that. The more conformed you are, the more accurately you can walk according to His Word. So, when the Apostle says, “See then that you walk circumspectly, see then that you walk accurately, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore, he said, Be you not unwise but be wise, understanding what the will of the

Lord is," walk accurately. The only way you will walk accurately is by walking according to Scripture.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your word, your truth, your grace, and your mercy. We pray, Lord, that you would help us to be accurate in our walking and make us more holy, godly, obedient, submissive, and conformed to your word. Give us grace to serve thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In thy name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 26

Where Are The Real Women?

February 7, 2021

Introduction: Defining a Real Woman

Look, if you would please, at Proverbs 31:30. We will be able to look at the entire passage momentarily, but right now, just verse 30. The title of the message is “Where Are the Real Women?” You should understand shortly. The Bible says, “Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain. But a woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised.”

The title, “Where Are the Real Women?” may be misunderstood by some. It is not a call for gender identification. When Alice and I were growing up, one could easily distinguish between men and women. Men wanted to be men, and they wanted everybody to know that they were men; women wanted to be women, and they also wanted everyone to know that they were women. We were not ashamed of the way that God created us, neither were we confused about our genders, and we certainly did not want to cross any barrier that God had erected.

The question in the title actually deals with a truly biblical and godly woman. Our text makes it exceedingly clear that a real woman is one that fears the Lord. The same thing is said concerning a real man: he is one that fears the Lord.

The Problem with Modern Men and Women

David said it like this in Psalm 86:11: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name." The real men and the real women are those who actually fear the Lord.

And, talking about being a real man, I would much rather be a little David than a giant Goliath. The truth of the matter is that you found out who the real man was because little David came out on top during that battle, obviously.

I have often said that, as far as men are concerned, we have sired a generation of spineless, gutless, ignorant, and worthless individuals who go by the title of men. Likewise, we have sired a generation of young women who cannot cook, clean, sew, garden, keep house, raise children, or love their husbands. It seems that today both men and women refuse to grow up and refuse to be mature.

Most of the time now, you find that most men and women sit around, watch TV, play games, read trashy magazines, and refuse to take responsibility for their lives. If you take an overview of the average individual today, you will discover that most people want everything handed to them on a silver platter. Most people today can survive on the governmental dole, EBT cards, stimulus checks, and anything else they can grasp from the government, and they are exceedingly happy. There is no work involved, no responsibility, no incentive, no concern, and no desire to improve their status. Usually, there is not even a whimper of gratitude for everything handed to them and given to them. They can simply demand it and could care less about being thankful for anything.

I absolutely have no respect for any man or woman who lies around the house, refuses to dress, refuses to work, and even refuses to try to help themselves. The Bible says in 2 Thessalonians 3 and verse 10, the Apostle Paul said, "Even when we were among

you, we commanded you that if any will not work, neither should he eat."

Have you ever stopped to think that that would be a very easy way to rid the welfare roles of individuals? Just let them starve. You say that is cruel. No, it is not cruel. If a man thought he was really starving, he would get up, get to work, and get something to eat. He would not starve. At least most people would not. There may be some stupid enough to do that, but most people would not. As long as you continue to hand people everything they want without any work, they will be content to remain on the dole.

Government Dependency Destroys Work Ethic

All you have to do is read one little book titled The American Indian, written by R. J. Rushdoony. Rushdoony was a missionary to the Indians for eleven years. The little book is probably not more than a third of an inch thick, something like that. But it is absolutely astounding, because it details and shows how our own government literally destroyed the Indians by giving them everything and making them totally dependent upon the federal government. In that book, he also points out that the same thing is happening and has happened to the black race. When you consider the black race today, most of them are absolutely totally dependent upon the government.

I realize not all; I understand that. But what has happened to the Indian has also happened to the blacks, and what has happened to the blacks is also happening to the whites. Obviously, there is now no desire to work. It seems as if the government's intent is to keep everybody on the reservation. The work ethic of any and every race has basically been destroyed in order to keep people in subservience to the controlling elite. No doubt, guaranteed universal income will finish us off, because people will no longer have to work. They simply hold their hands out and get whatever they need.

When we think about Proverbs 31, and we are talking about a real woman—and a real man a little bit later—there is a lot that has been preached, proclaimed, and taught concerning the virtuous woman. But before I show you the truth concerning the virtuous

woman, I want us to look at verse 30 and analyze this verse before we go any further.

Exposition of Proverbs 31:30: Favor and Beauty

Why should we understand this? The answer is because most men usually do not know what to look for in a wife, and most women do not know what to look for in a husband. That is a different sermon, but it is the truth as well. Our Lord, in verse 30, makes two declarations that are very offensive and contrary to the flesh. The first is this: “Favor is deceitful.”

The Hebrew word for favor here is translated as favor in our Bibles, but it is also translated as precious, pleasant, and well-favored. It refers to what you and I would call grace, charm, and elegance. Everyone has met a very charming, elegant woman who has been duly impressive. However, verse 30 says, “Favor is deceitful.” The word deceitful refers to that which is false, vain, wrong, a lie, a deception, and a disappointment. Interestingly enough, the same Hebrew word is translated in our Bibles as lie twenty-eight times and as liar one time. So he says very clearly, favor is deceitful; favor is a lie.

Every one of us has heard and read about polished women, usually referring to those who have been schooled and trained in the graces of elegance. In times past, wealthy men were in the habit of sending their daughters to charm schools. One may learn the habits and ways of charm and favor without being charming and favorable in and of herself. We must understand, then, that favor, grace, charm, and elegance will fade.

Moreover, sometimes it is nothing more than a charade, a facade, a fakery. The Bible says that favor is deceitful. When anyone estimates a woman, his wife, or the works of a wife merely by the loveliness and charm of her external character or physical being, the Bible says he is deceived, because favor is deceitful.

Matthew Poole said it like this: "It favor gives a false representation of the person, being oftentimes a cover to a most deformed soul and to many evil and hateful qualities, partly because it doth not give a man that content and satisfaction which

at first he promised himself from it, and partly because it is soon lost, not only by death, but by many diseases and contingencies." So he says that favor is deceitful.

Here's the second offensive truth: beauty is vain. You could ask yourself this question: What man has not been struck by a beautiful woman? Beauty oftentimes is indeed in the eye of the beholder, yet it is beauty that normally attracts both men and women. Women look for handsome men, and men look for beautiful women. But according to Scripture, beauty is vain.

The Hebrew word for vain here means not only vanity and that which is vain, but is also translated in the Bible as a vapor or as a breath. On a good, crisp morning, you can go outside and blow your breath; you can see it momentarily, and then it disappears. That is exactly what he is saying here: beauty is vain. It is a vapor; it goes away.

Many jokes have been made concerning beauty and ugliness. One wit said that ugliness is superior to beauty because ugliness lasts. Well, maybe it does. But we can joke all day long; the Bible says that beauty is vain. I must also point out that normally what we call ugliness sometimes hides real beauty. Most of the time, we are attracted by what is on the outside and never really consider what is on the inside.

Illustrations of Inner vs. Outer Beauty

So let me give you a couple of illustrations. Years ago, I met a well-favored young woman. She was very attractive, but she had a nose like a hawk. When I first saw her, the thought that hit my mind was, “This is the ugliest woman I guess I've ever seen in my entire life.” The truth of the matter is, I got to know that young woman. Over several months, as I talked with her and discussed things, I discovered that she was one of the sweetest, kindest, most godly young women I'd ever met. What I thought was ugly turned out to be exceedingly beautiful.

In fact, Alice and I had her and her fiancé over to our house for supper one night. I called her name and said, “Let me tell you, if I was not already married, I'd do everything in my power to take you

away from your fiancee and I'd marry you myself." The woman I thought was the ugliest woman I'd ever met turned out to be one of the most beautiful women because of her character, her godliness, and her inner disposition.

On the other hand, years ago I went to a certain state for a meeting. I knew the pastor, but I'd never met his wife. He came the first night to pick me up to take me to supper before we went out to church, and his wife was sitting in the back seat. When I saw her, my first thought was, "My, what a beautiful woman, what a gorgeous woman." She was beautiful, and I thought she was one of the most beautiful women I'd ever met in my life. I wasn't in that car ten minutes before I was saying to myself, "Thank God I'm not married to that woman." Her beauty had become instant and sheer ugliness, because her looks shielded a deformed spirit, an arrogant attitude, and a rude disposition.

So one that was beautiful became exceedingly ugly, and one that was ugly became exceedingly beautiful. A lot of men say, "Well, I'm going to marry this woman. She's beautiful." Let me ask you a question: Would you consider loving her even after she ceased to become beautiful? Many things can change beauty. You can have an automobile wreck, an accident, disease, or old age. You can do a lot of things, and you have to understand that beauty fades and disappears.

John Gill said it like this: "A well-favored look, a graceful countenance, symmetry, and proportion of parts, natural or artificial beauty, or vain and deceitful, oftentimes under them lies an ill-natured, deformed, and depraved mind." And I stopped right there and wrote one name in my notes: Jezebel. In all probability, Jezebel was a good-looking woman.

When you stop and think about it, even when Jehu came up and she figured that she was going to be killed anyhow, what did the Bible say? She painted her face and she tired her head and looked out the window, and she asked, "Did Zimri have peace who slew his master?" In other words, learn a lesson from history before you try to kill me.

But look how wicked and vile she was. That is certainly true. Now contrast this. In verse 30, he says, “Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but—a woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” A woman that fears the Lord may or may not have charm. She may or may not be physically beautiful, yet she is morally, intellectually, and spiritually beautiful. Her works demonstrate that she does fear the Lord. Look in verse 31.

He says, “...give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her, in the gates.”

Many Christians can quote Proverbs 1:7: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.” Many can also quote Proverbs 9:10: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.” The issue is not whether we can quote these verses, but whether we can apply them in our lives. Can we apply them?

The virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 is the woman who fears the Lord. If she fears the Lord, that fear will be evidenced by wisdom and understanding. It will also be evidenced in her works, in how she lives, and in how she acts. Now look at verse 10, because here is the question: “Who can find a virtuous woman?”

The Virtuous Woman's Character and Works

“For her price is far above rubies.” The Hebrew word translated virtuous refers to someone of strength, honor, valor, ability, and efficiency. That is the virtuous woman, and those attributes can only be found in the Lord. Let us point out some truths concerning the virtuous woman in this chapter and tie them together toward the end. Verse 10 asks, “Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies.”

Verses 11 and 12 say, “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.” The Bible says that the heart of her husband does safely trust in her. The real woman, the virtuous woman, is the one who fears the Lord, in whom her husband may safely and rightly place his trust.

She is not against him; she is for him. She will honor him. She will not abuse or misuse him. She will be satisfied with his provision, and he will have no need of spoil. The word spoil refers to plunder, booty, prey, or dishonest gain in booty.

The Virtuous Woman Is a Woman of Industry

She is not going to drive her husband into wickedness just to satisfy her outlandish desires or what she thinks she needs when in reality she does not. In other words, she is not going to be a Jezebel.

Years ago, when Alice and I first got married, I worked for a man named Ed Chambers, a State Farm agent. There was a school nearby, and we insured the president of that school. He was an older man, not an attractive man by any stretch of the imagination, but he had a position, and I am sure that position brought a little money.

I remember his much younger wife walking by our office in high heels. We had full plate-glass windows. She would walk by dressed to the absolute tee, with a fur around her shoulders, rings on about every finger, a little leash in her hand, and a little toy poodle with a diamond necklace and painted toenails. Every time I saw her, I could not help but think, “Her husband cannot even pay his insurance.” He was either always late or had to make payments because he never had any money. I often wondered where it went, and I think I discovered it when I watched her walk down the street. She was outlandish.

This is what the Bible is saying: Here is a woman of integrity. She is not going to demand that her husband give her things she knows he cannot possibly afford. She is not going to drive him to be a wicked man. She is not going to be a Jezebel.

The virtuous woman is also a woman of industry. Look in verses 13 through 19: “She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a

vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff."

"She maketh fine linen, and selleth it, and delivereth girdles unto the merchants." In other words, this virtuous woman is a worker. She is no sluggard. She does not lie around in her pajamas until noon. She is not occupied with television, soap operas, magazines, or idleness. She is up before dawn providing for her house. She gardens, sews, and cooks.

She works into the night. "She seeketh wool and flax and worketh," willingly. She is not made to work. She is not forced to work. She wants to work, and she does so willingly. She keeps her house. She keeps her garden. She keeps her fruit trees. She works. She has a biblical work ethic.

She is also industrious in the sense that she makes and sells her goods. She works from inside her home, and she delivers her goods to the merchants. She is sharp; she understands the economy. Our English word economy is made up of two Greek words, oikos nomos. Oikos is the Greek word for house, and nomos means law. It actually means the law of the house, or household law, or household management. She understands the economy. She understands the law of the house. She understands household management.

This woman is not only a woman of integrity. She is not only a woman of industry. She is also a woman who is involved. "She stretches out her hand to the poor. Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." She has a concern for others. She is compassionate. She does not simply labor for herself or just for her family. She always has an interest in her neighbors and the poor as well.

"She stretches out her hand," singular, "to the poor. She reacheth forth her hands," plural, "to the needy." In other words, here is a woman who gives liberally and gives graciously. Her liberality is very extensive: it reaches to many, it reaches at a distance, and it is done with great cheerfulness and readiness.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 13:16, “But to do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Galatians 6:10 says, “As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto the household of faith.” We have an obligation to all men, generally speaking, but we have a special duty and obligation to the household of faith.

Here is a woman who is involved. She is not concerned just with herself or just with her family, but she is also concerned with the poor.

Fourth, the virtuous woman is one who looks ahead. Verse 21 says, “She is not afraid of the snow for her household. For all her household are clothed with scarlet. She maketh herself coverings of tapestry. Her clothing is silk and purple.” The virtuous woman is a prepper, in one sense of the word. She looks ahead and prepares. She thinks ahead and knows what is coming.

She follows the counsel of Proverbs 22:3: “A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished.” This woman is prudent. It may be spring, and it is wonderful; it may be summer, and it is warm; but she knows that winter is coming. She is not anxious for the comfort, safety, and health of her family because she has made preparation. “She is not afraid of the snow for her household. For all of her household are clothed with scarlet.”

Albert Barnes said of the word scarlet, “For all of her household are clothed with scarlet. Not scarlet for the color. Color can avail nothing in keeping off the cold, nor would it be a proper color for the bogs and the dirt of winter.” He then goes into the Hebrew word, but “Shanin” from “Shanah,” means to iterate or to double, signifies not only scarlet, so-called, from being twice or doubly dyed, but also double garments. Not only the ordinary coat, but also the great coat also, or a cloak to cover all. But most probably, this refers to double garments or two-fold what they are accustomed to wear is here intended.

This woman makes sure that her family is warm in the winter. She is also concerned with that which is beautiful and appropriate. “She maketh herself coverings of tapestry. Her clothing is silk and

purple." In other words, practicality and beauty are combined in her. She is not only practical, but she also takes care to make beautiful things as well.

Fifth, the virtuous woman makes sure that her husband is honored. "Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land." Here is a man who is renowned and noted for his wife's work and integrity. He sits in the gate. He is either a ruler, a counselor, or a diplomat. He is someone who is able either to rule or at least to counsel rulers, because all government in the Bible was in the gates. It was open and public. If you sat in the gates, it meant that you were either a ruler, an elder, a diplomat, or a counselor. You were there for some reason.

The Bible says in Proverbs chapter 12 and verse 4, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, but that she maketh ashamed is as rottenness to the bones." So a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, but she that maketh the shame is as rottenness to the bones. This virtuous woman, as a loving wife, sees the need for the respectability and honor of her husband. She understands that her conduct reflects upon him and either contributes to or diminishes his honor.

He is placed first in her life. You say, "I thought God was supposed to be first." Well, He is. But the way a wife places God first is by obedience, just the same way a man places God first: by obedience. Ephesians 5:33 says, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." The husband is to love his wife even as himself, and the wife is to reverence her husband.

The Wife's Role in Enabling Her Husband

The word reverence is from the Greek word phobeo, which is normally translated as fear. But here in the context, it means to reverence, to venerate, to treat with deference, or with reverential respect and obedience. In other words, she makes sure that she not only honors her husband, but that others do as well. Her life promotes his life. Her life moves in terms of his life.

Now, I want you to think of the implication we have in verse 23. When the Bible says, “Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders thereof,” I want you to think about the entire context. This virtuous woman is a woman that works, she plans, she saves, is frugal, charitable, generous, and kind. It is her attitude and her actions that allow her husband to do what he must do, has to do, and what God has called him to do. It is not that the husband is lazy, indolent, or slothful. There are other areas in which he is concerned.

I'll give it to you like this. For years, and we still do, but for years Alice and I have had a garden. Every spring, I take the tractor and the harrow, and I harrow up that garden. Now, Alice plants it, she waters it, she weeds it, she picks it, she cooks it, she preserves it, but it's our garden.

You may say, “Well, you did very little.” That is true, but it is our garden. I did the first part, and she did the rest. Why am I not a gardener? Because I am doing something else.

I could say, “You are welcome to come to our house.” It is indeed our house, but she keeps it. She sweeps it, mops the floors, vacuums, does the dishes, washes the clothes, makes the bed, and plans and cooks the meals. Still, it is our house. She knows where everything is. I know where my books are and where some of my clothes are, but if I want something else, I have to ask her because she puts it away. She knows where it is, but it is still our house.

The point I am trying to make is very simple: I could never do the studying and preparation required for preaching without her. It is her work and her attitude that allow me to fulfill the role to which God has called me. That is why God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make an help meet for him.” The word meet literally means, “I will make a helper suitable unto him,” a helper who would answer to his needs. That is exactly the role model of the wife; it is the biblical role model.

God has called both the man and the wife to dominion. We are both engaged in dominion, but we engage in it from different roles and positions.

Whatever success I have, she has. Whatever blessings I have, she has. Ziklag was a city of David, given to him by Achish, a Philistine king. David had six hundred men who rode with him, and their wives and children were in Ziklag. While David was away, the Philistines came along, I believe it was, and burned Ziklag with fire. They took all the wives, children, and goods out of the city.

Everybody was upset, weeping and crying. When they returned, all their wives and children were gone, and everything was gone. David asked the Lord, “Shall I pursue?” The Lord said, “Yes.” “Will I overtake them?” The Lord said, “Yes.” “Will I be victorious?” The Lord said, “Yes.” Of David’s six hundred men, two hundred were so faint that they could not go.

They had wept and wept and cried and just weren't able to go. And so David took the 400 men and he went and captured and brought back every man, his wife, all the children, all the goods, and even more that was stolen from Ziklag, because these people had been on a robbing spree, and David brought it all back. So some of the wicked men who were with David decided, well, here's what we're going to do. We're going to give to every man his wife and every man his children, but the rest is stuff we're going to keep for ourselves. Look what David said. 1 Samuel chapter 30. Look, if you would please, at verse 24. David said, "For who will hearken to you in this matter? But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that teareth by the stuff. They shall part alike." Did you hear that? They shall part alike.

So, when a husband and wife work together, they may not necessarily be doing exactly the same thing. But they're both exercising dominion. And God says whatever blessings and whatever success the husband has, they shall part and they shall part alike. In other words, they are one in Christ.

Now, let me point something else out. I want you to go back to Proverbs chapter 31. The virtuous woman is also one that is honorable and honored. So let's begin reading there with verse 25. The Bible says, "Strength and honor are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come." Let me just stop there. We'll read a little bit more just momentarily. But look at verse 25. "Strength and

honor are her clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come." The two words strength and honor in reference to her clothing certainly does not mean that she was just simply well-dressed. Certainly she probably was because obviously this was a hard-working woman, but this refers to her character. It refers to her integrity. Strength and honor are her clothing. Hold Proverbs 31 and turn in your Bibles first to 1st Timothy chapter 2 and then we're going to 1st Peter chapter 3. So look in 1st Timothy chapter 2, 1st Timothy chapter 2 and let's begin reading there with verse 9. 1st Timothy chapter 2 verse 9.

Inner Adorning and the Law of Kindness

The Bible says, "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety." Now look, "not with broidered hair or gold or pearls or costly array." In other words, don't let that be all there is to you. But here's what you must have, "but which becometh women professing godliness with good works." In other words, he's saying, let your beauty be on the inside. Not on the outside. Don't depend on your hair, or your gold, or pearls, or fancy dress. No, no, no.

You be a godly woman. Look now in 1 Peter chapter 3, beginning with verse 1: “Likewise you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation,” that is, the conduct, “of the wives; while they behold your chaste,” or pure, “conversation or conduct, coupled with fear.

“Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold or putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters you are, as long as you do well and not afraid with any amazement.”

Then he says, “Likewise, you husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as into the

weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered." Ladies, let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. This is the character, the integrity, and the honor of the holy women who trusted in God, adorned themselves, and were in subjection to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord.

Now, just to show you that each of us are still sinners and that none of us are perfect, Ms. Effie, after fifty-eight years of marriage, I still can't get Alice to call me Lord. I don't understand that. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, she just hasn't done that to me yet.

But notice the emphasis in both of these passages, as well as Proverbs 31: character, integrity, and godliness. Go back to Proverbs chapter 31, because the rest of this passage will demonstrate exactly what I have said. After it says that strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come, verse 26 says, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

John Trapp said, "Her mouth is not always open, but duly shut, and discreetly opened. Her words are few, true, and ponderous. The stream and current of her conference tends either to wisdom or kindness, that is, to duties either of piety or charity."

Adam Clark said, "In her tongue is the law of kindness. This is the most distinguishing excellence of this woman. There are very few of those who are called managing women who are not lords over their husbands, tyrants over their servants, and insolent among their neighbors. But this woman, with all her eminence and excellence, who is of a meek and quiet spirit, blessed woman."

In other words, God is saying that she is not a loudmouth, unruly, insolent, or churlish woman. Out of her mouth come kindness and wisdom. She is not bitter, hateful, resentful, revengeful, insulting, or unkind. She honors her husband and her children, and they in turn arise and honor her.

Look again at verse 25: "Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come." Now skip down to verse 28:

"Her children arise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her." It is important to grasp this one point: those who know this woman most intimately are constantly blessing her and praising her.

The Reward of a Godly Life

They have observed her godly character for years. They know it is not hypocritical, a facade, or a show. They know that it is real and genuine. Husbands and wives can fool those on the outside, but they cannot fool each other. Fathers and mothers and children can fool those on the outside, but they cannot fool each other. The Bible says in verse 28, “Her children arise up and call her blessed, and her husband also, he praises her.” In other words, those who know this woman most intimately are the ones blessing and praising her because they understand the genuineness of her life. That is why he said in verse 25, “She shall rejoice in time to come.” If the godly woman desires recognition, praise, and honor from her children and husband, she is required to live a consistent, godly, and faithful life.

Now consider the conclusion God gives concerning this virtuous woman: “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excelest them all. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

Conclusion: Godliness Excels All

I began this message by asking, Where are the real women? By that question I was referring to real women of honesty, worth, character, and integrity; women who love and honor their husbands; women who enable their husbands to fulfill the role God has called them unto. Such women excel above all other women. This is indeed the virtuous woman. Any young woman who truly wants to be a holy, godly woman should study Proverbs 31 and emulate this virtuous woman, because the virtuous woman is always one who fears the Lord Jesus Christ.

Proverbs chapter 1 begins with the wise man. The first five verses establish their purpose: "The Proverbs of Solomon, the son

of David, king of Israel, to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, to give subtlety to the simple and to the young man, knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear and will increase learning and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." The very first verses of Proverbs chapter 1 deal with the wise man. The wise man is one that fears the Lord and follows instruction and understanding. And this same book ends now in Proverbs 31 with the wise woman who fears the Lord. So the book of Proverbs ends just as it begins, but it begins with the wise man and it ends with the wise woman.

So a wise man who is looking for a wife will always look primarily for a godly wife, a woman of character and integrity. Also, a wise woman is going to look for a godly man, a man of character and integrity. According to Proverbs 31 and according to Proverbs 1, godliness is far better than favor and fame and beauty. The woman that fears the Lord and the man that fears the Lord, or the individuals of character and holiness and integrity, receive those attributes through the fear of the Lord; it is the fear of the Lord that produces those attributes. So favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain. But godliness, and one that fears the Lord, excels everything.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word, Your truth. Lord, we admit and confess our failures so many times. Yet, Lord, we ask Thee to make us holy, godly, and obedient. May we honor Thee and honor each other. May, Father, we glorify Thee in all that we say and do. We ask, Father, that You would make us real women and real men in the sense that we fear the Lord and obey Him. Give us Your grace, we pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER 27

How To Develop A Loving Relationship With The Lord

March 12, 2022

Introduction: The Unquenchable Nature of Love

The title of the message is “Developing a Loving Relationship with the Lord,” or “How to Develop a Loving Relationship with the Lord.” So, if you look at verse 7: “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned.” I have dealt with this subject in times past, and yet I was reading through the book of the Song of Solomon recently, and this subject was again impressed upon my mind. Some of the messages that I have dealt with in time past are: what it would be like to love the Lord with all of your heart; how to love the Lord with all of your heart; how to gauge your love for Christ; how to increase your love for Christ; prerequisites for loving Christ, which was two messages; love, the greatest blessing; loving the Lord Jesus Christ; and a number of other sermons as well.

It is certainly not my intent today to repeat those sermons. If I did, we would probably be here all afternoon and into the night. But I do want to build upon those messages and give you some new applications, or at least some that I think are often overlooked. Our text makes it very clear that genuine love, real genuine love, cannot be quenched. It is basically inextinguishable and insuperable, because the Bible says that many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. It is also represented in this verse as being exceedingly valuable and inestimable, because the Scripture also says that if a man would give all the substance of the house for love, it would be utterly condemned.

Christ as the Greater Solomon

Historically, the Song of Solomon is a song of intimacy. It is usually a picture of Jesus Christ and His church. It is also depicted as a relationship between a man and his wife. However, we have to understand that there is the greater picture of Christ and the church. There is in this book a declaration of the bridegroom for the love of the bride, and also a declaration of the love of the bride for the bridegroom as well. But although Solomon is mentioned in the Song of Solomon, we have to remember two key verses in the New Testament.

Matthew 1:1 says, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Solomon, the son of Abraham.” Jesus Christ, then, is the true son of David, the true Solomon, and the true son of Abraham. He is the true Isaac.

Matthew 12:42 records our Lord's words: “The queen of the south shall rise up in judgment against this generation and shall condemn it. For she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” Jesus Christ is not only the true son of David; He is also the greater Solomon. Solomon, in this book and in the other books of the Bible, is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, albeit not a perfect picture.

None of the pictures of our Lord Jesus Christ are perfect, because there is only one perfect One, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. But I believe this book teaches very clearly that a

personal, loving, intimate relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely desirable and possible. It is not only desirable and possible; it is also absolutely necessary. And here is why.

John 17:3, from the high-priestly prayer of our Lord, says, “And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true and living God and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.” He defines eternal life for you. Eternal life is not living somewhere in heaven forever, and it is not something you get when you die. If you do not have eternal life now, you will never have it in eternity. Eternal life is knowing the one true and living God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.

Eternal Life Defined as Knowing God

The word “know” indicates a personal, intimate relationship. In fact, the Greek word is ginōskō, and it literally means to know, to learn, to understand, and to get a knowledge of. The word “know” is also the Hebrew idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and his wife. This occurs a number of times in the Bible. Genesis 4:1 says, “And Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I've gotten a man from the Lord.” Genesis 4:17 says, “And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after Enoch his son.” Genesis 4:25 says, “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth.”

In light of that, consider Amos 3:1–2: “Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying.” He speaks of the children of Israel and of the whole family. Then he says, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”

What does it mean when He says, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth”? Did He not know the other families or the other nations? Of course He did. Did He not know the sins of the other nations and families of the earth? Yes, He did, because He is omniscient. He knows everything.

But this means that Israel was the only nation God chose, revealed Himself to, and entered into a covenant with. He did that with no other nation. He did not enter into a covenant with the Babylonians, the Assyrians, or the Egyptians. It was Israel and Israel only. As you read through the Bible, you will find that Israel was to be His peculiar treasure, His priest, and His people. They were to be His people, and He was to be their God.

The first passage is found in Exodus 6:7. Here is what God said to these people: “And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of Egypt.” So God said, “I’m going to take you for a people, and I am going to be your God.” Then, in Leviticus 26:12, He said: “And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people.” Israel, then, was to be in a personal, intimate relationship, a covenantal relationship, with the One True and the Living God.

They were to serve Him, honor Him, and worship Him. Let me put it to you very poignantly: Nothing has really changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament in one sense of the word. In Deuteronomy 10:12, Scripture says: “And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”

Then, in Mark chapter 12, beginning with verse 28, Scripture says: “And one of the scribes came in, having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?” Everyone knows the very first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

What is the first commandment? Our Lord answered in verse 29: "The first of all the commandments is..." Actually, He quotes Deuteronomy 6:4, the Shema Israel: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love him, or love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." It was required of the

Old Testament saints to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul, strength, and being. It is required of New Testament saints as well. So the question has to be asked: How do we love the Lord with all of our hearts? You can go back and listen to that message that I preached on that. But another leading question is this: How do we develop a personal, intimate relationship with the one true and the living God and love Him at the same time with all of our hearts?

Love as Obedience and an Act of the Will

I want you to understand this principle in order that you might see the applications that I am going to be making today. Real, true, genuine love is not feeling, it is not emotion, and it is not some abstract thing somewhere floating around out in the universe. According to the Word of God, real, genuine love is obedience. Moreover, love is an act of the will. Love is not emotions. Love is not feelings. Love is an act of the will. You cannot command emotions. You cannot command feelings. I could look at Steve and say, "Steve, I command you to feel sick." He cannot just feel sick. I could say, "Don, I command you to feel happy." You do not feel happy when you talk about your emotions or your feelings.

Most of these are usually visceral responses or muscular responses to certain situations and circumstances. I have heard people say, “I’ve just felt so embarrassed.” Well, that was a response to a situation, to a circumstance. They had done something wrong and got caught, or they had made some big mistake. But love is an act of the will.

I could command you to do certain things that are acts of the will. I could say, “Clay, go get this problem straightened out with Gary.” Or I could say, “Steve, go fix that truck outside.” Those are acts of the will. You can do those. You do not command emotions. You do not command feelings, but you can command acts of the will. I have just said that love, according to the Bible, is obedience, and it is an act of the will.

I want you to turn with me to several passages. We will start in the book of John, then look at Romans and 1 John. I want you to

see what I have just enunciated: love is indeed an act of the will, and it is indeed obedience. Look in John chapter 14, at verse 21.

Here is what our Lord said: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

Look at that very easily and very clearly: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.”

Now skip down to verse 24: “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings, or my commandments, and the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” Our Lord said, if you love Me, you will keep My commandments—that is, obedience—and He is commanding the will. He said that he who has His commandments or His sayings and does not keep them is the one who does not love Him.

Now look in your Bible at Romans chapter 13. We will come back to this passage a little bit later, but I want you to see this in Romans 13. Begin with verse 8: “Owe no man anything but to love one another.” Here it is spelled out for us. Then look at the next statement: “For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” Verse 9.

"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet. Now if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Now watch this last verse: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." What law did he just quote? He quoted some of the Ten Commandments. Love is the fulfilling of the law. So love is obedience.

Now, in 1 John chapter 2, beginning with verse 3, the Scripture says, "And hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments." How do I know that I know the Lord? How do I know that I know that I'm a Christian? Because He's enabling me, He's empowering me to keep His word, to obey Him. That's what He's saying: "Hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his

commandments." Now look at verse 4: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth's not in him."

So He says we know that we know Him if we keep His commandments. The man that says, "I know Him"—that is, I have a personal intimate relationship with the Lord—but is disobedient, God said that man's a liar and the truth's not in him. Once again, if you keep the commandments, it's evidence that you know Him. If you don't keep them, it's evidence that you do not know Him.

In 1 John chapter 5, if you want a definition of what love really is, here it is spelled out for you in black and white. Verse 1 says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. And every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." If you love God, you're going to love the brethren, which I'll cover later. Verse 2 says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." I'll explain that later. Verse 3 says, "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous."

What is the love of God? The love of God is obedience. The love of God is keeping His commandments. It is an established principle from Scripture that love is obedience and that love is an act of the will.

Love Transcends the Physical

One of the major problems that you and I have is thinking that somehow, if we love the Lord, loving the Lord is on the same scale, the same level, and the same par as loving our wives, our husbands, or our children. The truth of the matter is this: our love for the Lord is known to be superior to that. Our love for the Lord is actually above and beyond fleshly relations.

If I want to love my wife, I can hold her, caress her, kiss her, and tell her that I love her. If I want to love my grandchildren, great-grandchildren, or children, I can put them on my lap, put my arms around them, hug them, and tell them I love them. I mean, that's what we do. But do you realize it is impossible to physically

love the Lord? You can't hug Him, kiss Him, caress Him, or hold Him. That is an impossibility.

Now, I want to show you something. In Matthew chapter 12, beginning with verse 46, we read: "While he yet spake or talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without"—this would be his fleshly family, his half-brothers and his mother—"desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven"—that's obedience—"the same is my brother, my sister, and my mother."

What did He just get through telling us? He is telling us that the relationship with Him transcends the physical. His mother, His sister, and His brothers are those that do the will of His Father who is in heaven.

In 2 Corinthians 5:16, the Apostle Paul relates this same truth: "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." He said it goes beyond the physical: "though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more."

You remember how John at the Last Supper laid his head on the breast of our Lord. That is impossible today. There is no way in the world that I could do that or you could do that. There is no way in the world you can run up to Him and shake His hand, hug His neck, put a bear hug on Him, kiss His cheek, or say, “I love you, Lord.” It is physically impossible. Therefore, when we are talking about loving the Lord now, we cannot think only in physical terms. We have to think beyond that.

Love is Always Demonstrable

Now, let me say something, and I am going to show it to you from Scripture and enlarge upon it. I want to emphasize again that love

is obedience. Listen carefully: if I increase my love for the Lord Jesus Christ, I increase my obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the very first truth you have to understand: number one, love is obedience. Here is the second truth that you must understand: real, genuine, biblical love is always demonstrable. I want you to turn to 1 John chapter 3. You can mark this passage because we will come back to it, Lord willing, before we close. Look in 1 John 3:16. Real love is demonstrable. Here it is: “Hereby perceive we the love of God.” The word “perceive” means to comprehend, to understand, to lay hold of. How do we lay hold of the love of God? “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He told us He loved us.”

No, that is not what the verse said. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.” It was a demonstrable love. He not only said, “I love you”; He demonstrated it by giving His life. Then He says, “and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” By the way, let me stop right there and quote 1 John 4:10, because the Bible says, “Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins.” Real biblical love is always demonstrable. That is why the latter part of verse 16 says, “we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Now watch verse 17.

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Thus, the truths that love is obedience and love is demonstrable should be deeply etched upon our minds if we are going to develop a loving, intimate relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Love is always demonstrable. Suppose Steve comes to my house, having walked the last ten miles because his truck has broken down. He says, "Pastor, I've walked ten miles. I'm hungry, I'm out of food, I'm out of gas, and my truck's broken down. Can you help me?" I could say, "I can. Be ye warmed and filled, and may your truck be healed. In the name of Christ, go your way."

Now, what does the Scripture say? If I did something that is stupid, how could the love of God be dwelling in me? No. If he comes to my house hungry, I feed him. If he comes thirsty, I give him something to drink. If he is out of gas, I give him gas. If he has a broken truck, I call somebody else because I am not a mechanic. Love is always demonstrable.

While I am not a pietist, and certainly do not agree with or hold the position of pietism—basically withdrawing from everyone and everything and thinking that you are going to commune totally and completely with the Lord all the time—there has to be a time of personal Bible study, personal Bible reading, personal prayer, and intimacy with our Lord. There is certainly nothing wrong with telling the Lord Jesus Christ that you love Him. I do every day. There is nothing wrong with telling your wife or husband that you love them; I tell Alice all the time. There is nothing wrong with telling your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, or adopted grandchildren that you love them. I do that all the time.

I even go further than that. There's nothing wrong with telling your animals that you love them. I tell my animals that. You should watch Claiborne. Alice can tell you some of the reactions that I have gotten. Claiborne can be on the console with me. If I'm driving down the road and can look at him, I'd say, "Claiborne, did I ever tell you about the time that you were a little puppy and I went to rescue you out of Jacksonville, Florida?"

"And when I walked in that door, you ran and jumped in my arms and said, ‘Take me home to Georgia and I'll be your dog.’ Do you remember that? Did Papa ever tell you that he loved you?" You should watch him. He'll turn his head, close his eyes, reach over, and start licking my ear and rubbing up against me. How do they know? I don't know. I could tell you about an experience I had with a 3,000 pound bull. He came up and rubbed against me like a little puppy. I don't know. I'm simply saying there's nothing wrong with any of that, for sure.

But the truth of the matter is this: here is where the rubber hits the road. There is nothing wrong with professing love, but love is more than talk because it is always demonstrable. So if I'm going

to tell the Lord that I love Him, there has to be a manifestation and demonstration of that love in my life.

I could tell Alice a hundred times a day that I love her, but if she caught me running around with other women, do you think she'd believe me? The answer is no. I could tell Gary a hundred times a day that I love him, but if he caught me stealing from him, do you think he'd believe my profession of love for him? I could tell Clay that I loved him, but if he found out I was going around lying about him, spreading rumors and untruths, do you think he would believe my profession that I love him? The answer is no. In other words, if there is real, genuine love, there is always going to be a demonstration of that love.

Romans chapter 13, verse 8, says, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another. For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. What is love? Love is obedience. Love is fulfilling the law. Now watch verse 9.

"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery." Wow. So if I tell Steve I love him, I'm not going to try to be trying to seduce his wife. How do I know that I love him? Because I honor him, I honor his wife. I honor him by honoring his wife. Love is not merely something I say; it is something I do.

Watch verse 9: "Thou shalt not kill." Well, if I tell Clay I love him, I do everything to defend him and protect him. I do not try to do anything to take his life from him. Then he said, "Thou shalt not steal." Again, if I'm going to love Carol, I'm not going to steal from her. "Thou shalt not bear false witness." If I'm going to love Ron, I'm not going to lie about him and spread rumors about him. If I'm going to love Sharon, I'm not going to be coveting anything that she has.

In other words, I'm going to act biblically toward them because love is the fulfilling of the law. Now, love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable. You are going to ask me, or at least you should be asking me, well, what about those passages where our Lord commands us to love our enemies?

Matthew 5:44 says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray

for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Luke 6:27 likewise says, "But I say unto you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."

How do I love someone who is trying to steal from me, harm me, or lie about me—someone who is trying to steal my liberty and freedom? The answer is by acting biblically toward them. I do not act toward them the way they are acting toward me. You cannot command feelings or emotions, but you can command an act of the will. God never commands me to hug or kiss my enemies, nor does He command me to have feelings toward them. He commands me to love them.

If a thief has stolen from me, I confront him and ask and demand that he make restitution according to the law of God. Then I am more than willing to forgive him and help him. I do not steal from him just because he stole from me. How do I love a liar? I love him by refusing to retaliate and tell lies about him as he did about me. I will not spread vicious rumors about him. I will confront him for his lying ways and ask him to repent and repudiate his lies, but I will not tell lies about him simply because he has told lies about me.

Romans 12:17 says, "Recompense to no man evil for evil." If Clay stands up in front of everybody and cusses me out, that does not give me the right to stand up and cuss him back. We are not to recompense evil for evil.

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men, if it be possible. As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves." We're talking about people who are doing us harm and doing us ill. He's not talking about self-defense, but about people lying and doing things like this. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Therefore, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him." What am I doing? He's done me wrong, but I'm doing right to him. If he's hungry, I'm going to feed him even though he's my enemy. "If he thirst, give him drink." Give him a glass of water, "for in doing so thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

The truth of the matter is this: loving our enemies simply means that we act biblically toward them, even though they're acting unbiblically toward us. We're not retaliating and giving back the same kind.

If we're to develop a loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we're to demonstrate our love toward Him and have that love grow and increase in obedience in every area of our lives. If I increase my love for the Lord Jesus Christ, I increase my obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. If I increase my obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, I increase my love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Because love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable. You can always demonstrate it.

Practical Applications in Family and Church

This is very practical. So many times we get confused when we're talking about loving the Lord and try to make it something insurmountable and very complex, when it's very simple. One of the young ladies that is around our house frequently has a shirt.

On the front of it, it simply says, “Let me overthink this situation.” That is what most people do, especially when it comes to Bible truth. We overthink it and try to make something simple very complex, when in reality it is not. So think about this: Love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable.

Look at Ephesians 5:25. Here is a verse every woman can quote: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” Look at that: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” God commands husbands to love their wives. He commands husbands to love their wives in the way that Christ loved the church, and He commands husbands to love their wives with a sacrificial love, because our Lord sacrificed Himself for the church. Love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable.

Since I have been commanded to love my wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, do you realize that the more deeply I love my wife, and the more biblically I love my wife, I am loving the Lord? I am obeying His command, and I am

demonstrating my obedience by loving my wife. Do you see that? In other words, this is something so absolutely simple.

Now let me go a little further. Just as most wives can quote Ephesians 5:25, most husbands can quote Ephesians 5:22–24. Let us put it together. Verse 22 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

Now skip down to verse 33: "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Although our Lord has been talking about husbands and wives, verse 32 says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." The husband is supposed to represent Jesus Christ as the head of the church, and the wife is supposed to represent the church in relationship to the Christ.

As the husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, the wife is to submit to him as unto the Lord Jesus Christ and reverence, or honor, her husband as the church reverences and honors Jesus Christ.

Let us put it together. The more I love my wife biblically and sacrifice for her, the more obedient I am to the command to love my wife. That means the more I am loving Christ and demonstrating my love for Christ. Likewise, the more my wife submits to me and honors me as her head, according to 1 Corinthians 11:3, the more she is demonstrating her love for Jesus Christ. God has given His order: God, Christ, man, and woman. He has very pointedly appointed man to be the head of the woman. It is really very simple.

And the wife is to reverence her husband, honor her husband, or treat him honorably. There are very few Christian women who would get into a knockdown, drag-out fight with their husbands. But there are Christian women who will speak disrespectfully, dishonorably, and hatefully to their husbands.

A lot of times, it is not how you say what you say, or what you say, but how you say it. Tonal patterns can convey disgust, disrespect, and anger just like words. If I looked at Alice, smiled, and said, “I love you, sweetheart,” she would understand that. But I can use those same words, look at her, and say, “I love you, sweetheart,” and she knows there is anger and ill will. In other words, all of this is involved in loving the Lord. How do I love the Lord? By being obedient in every area and sphere of my life, in everyday things.

While we are at it, consider Ephesians 6:1–3: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” There comes a time when children are, in one sense, no longer obligated to obey in that sense—when they leave home and have a house of their own. It is always wise to obey as best you can. But there is never, ever a time when you can dishonor your parents. Honor is always there.

So here is what God is saying. The more children—whether they are little, teenagers, or grown; it does not matter—the more children obey and honor their parents, the more they are loving the Lord, because this is His command. Love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable. When children, even grown children, demonstrate honor toward their parents, that is part of loving the Lord. When children demonstrate dishonor, that is despising the Lord. Love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable. This is why He says, “Children, obey your parents, honor thy father and thy mother.”

In 1 John chapter 3, beginning at verse 11, we read: “For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” He then gives us a negative: “Not as Cain, who is that wicked one, and slew his brother.” Hark back to Romans 13: “Thou shalt not kill.” Cain demonstrated that he hated Abel, for he murdered him. “And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.”

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

“And hereby we do know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He gave us commandment." How is our love for the brethren demonstrated? According to this passage, we're willing to lay down our lives for them. We're willing to treat them honestly and deal honestly with them. We're willing to feed them if they're hungry and give them something to drink if they're thirsty. In other words, we're willing to supply their needs whenever it is necessary.

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" It doesn't. Love is always demonstrable. If I see my brother have need, I'm going to take care of that need the best I can.

Blessings of Obedient Love

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." You have to have a manifestation, a demonstration of that love. That's what he means by "deed and in truth."

What are the benefits and blessings of developing a loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ through obedience in every area and sphere of our lives? "And hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him." What confirms the truth of God in our lives? Our obedience to that truth.

We are not just hearers of the Word; we are doers of the Word. We are not just people who go to church and turn around and go home. We are the ones who apply the truths to our lives. Look in verse 20: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things." In other words, we cannot go to God with known sin and rebellion, because God knows that. But, "if our heart condemn us not, beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

If I mistreat Steve, and I am ugly and hateful toward him, and do not supply his need when he is in need, when I go to prayer, my heart is going to condemn me, because I know I have violated the Word of God and the law of God. But if I have not been ugly and hateful toward him and have supplied his need, then, "If our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God." What is going to give us confidence? Obedience.

Now watch this. He said in verse 22, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him"—answered prayer. Why? "Because we keep his commandments." In other words, there is a correlation between obedience and blessing. Is it easier to bless an obedient child than a disobedient child? Of course.

It is the same thing with our Heavenly Father: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments." Here is the clincher: "And do those things that are pleasing in his sight." That is obedience. If you ask a child to do something in a certain way, and that child returns saying, "Father, I've done what you've asked me to do. And I've done it in the way that you asked me to do it," and asks, "Are you pleased with me?" what is the father going to say and do? "Of course, I am." He picks the child up, hugs him, and says, "I love you. Thank you for your obedience."

Pleasing our Heavenly Father is as easy as obeying our Heavenly Father. One of the blessings and benefits of obedience is that we please Him.

The Song of Solomon 8:7 shows that love actually is unquenchable. If you really and truly have a genuine and sincere love for God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, nothing is going to change your obedience to Him. You are going to obey, or, as we would say on the farm, bust a gut trying. You are going to do what is right, regardless of a flood or high water. The only way to build a loving relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ is through obedience. What did our Lord say in John 14:21? "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And in verse 24, He said, "He that keepeth not my sayings, loveth me not." There is no way that you can be rebellious, disobedient, wicked, and sinful and say, "Lord, I love you." You do not. You are a liar. The only way that we can have and continue to develop an intimate personal relationship with God the Father is through obedience to His Word in every area and sphere.

Conclusion: Choose Your Relationship

Here is the second application: love is not a warm feeling, a gush of emotions, or goosebumps on my neck. Love is obedience. If I love my wife the way Christ commands me to love my wife, there are feelings and emotions, but the feelings and emotions are not love; they are the result and consequence of love. Love is obedience. We are emotional creatures and we do have feelings, but love is obedience, and love to God is always demonstrable. I can demonstrate my love simply by obeying simple, everyday commands.

Here is the third one to think about. This is why I developed and titled this message "Developing an Intimate Relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ." You are developing a relationship every day in every way. You are either developing a relationship with sin or the Savior, with the Lord or with lust, with covetousness or with Christ, with disobedience or with deity. You cannot escape a relationship. You are either going to have an intimate personal relationship with the one true and living God through Jesus Christ,

or you will have a personal intimate relationship with sin, wickedness, and disobedience.

Choose carefully, because one relationship ends in life, and the other ends in death. If we want a personal, intimate, loving relationship with Jesus Christ—one that increases, pleases Him, assures our hearts, and gives us confidence toward Him—it is only through obedience to Him. Love is obedience, and love is always demonstrable.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. We thank You, blessed Lord, that Thou hast indeed made it possible for each of us to have a personal, intimate relationship with the one true and living God through Thyself and through the power and person of the Holy Spirit of God. Help us, Lord, to develop that relationship, to please Thee, walk pleasing in Thy sight, and do those things acceptable unto Thee. Give us grace, Father, that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, amen.

CHAPTER 28

Until Then

August 15, 2022

Introduction: The Nature of Questions

In Luke chapter 20, beginning with verse 41, the Bible says, “And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David’s son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?”

When you think about the word questions, you have to understand that everyone has questions. Questions are not necessarily bad in and of themselves. It is sometimes just the use of questions that happens to be questionable, because many times questions can be nothing more than a delaying tactic. The more I ask questions, the more I can put off doing what I need to do or what I should be doing. Truly, there are times when questions can be very good in the sense that they are used as a delaying tactic.

For instance, in a court battle, usually when there are opposing parties and the parties are kind of ill at each other, one of the best

lawyers is known as “lawyer delay,” because you always ask for continuances, and then you always pose for questions. The more questions you ask, the longer it takes for them to respond and to answer.

Questions sometimes are good, and sometimes they are bad. They may be used to ensnare, to entrap, or to mock and ridicule and deride. But questions should be asked for information and, of course, for understanding and direction. However, that is not necessarily always the case. When you look in Luke chapter 20, you find that the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees were always attempting to entrap and ensnare our Lord with questions. We will work our way down to verse 41 momentarily, but first notice verse 20.

The First Entrapment Question: Tribute to Caesar

The Bible says, "And they watched him." So clearly, they were looking for a perfect opportunity to entrap and ensnare the Lord Jesus Christ, but that was not all they did. "And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, so that they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." These were wicked men feigning themselves as just men, when in reality they were simply pretending to be righteous. They were indeed spies, and they were hypocrites.

They were not interested in the truth or in learning. They simply wanted to entrap Jesus Christ and, of course, deliver Him over to the authority. In verses 21 and 22, they ask Him this first question. "And they ask him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly."

"Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?" Now, note first of all how they tried to play with our Lord's ego. They praised Him in verse 21. They said, "We know that you teach that which is right. We understand that. And we know that you don't accept the persons of anyone." In other words, He was going to tell the truth regardless of whom it hit or hurt. They also said that He was indeed the teacher of the way of God. They understood that. Yet

although they were playing Him and building Him up, their intent was to entrap and ensnare Him as well.

So here was the question they asked Him: "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" This was indeed a loaded question. If our Lord said, "No, it is not lawful to give tribute to Caesar," they would turn Him over to the authorities, and Caesar would nail Him. If He answered, "Yes, you must pay tribute to Caesar," He would lose all His testimony and acceptance with the people, because the people actually hated Rome.

The Jews were extremely full of disgust with the Roman Empire. Let me give you one good reason why. In the Bible there were actually three tithes: the Levitical tithe, which was 10 percent; the tithe of rejoicing, which was 10 percent; and the poor tithe, which was 10 percent, but was taken only every three years. Thus, when they were tithing, they were actually tithing 23 and one-third percent per year. On top of that were all the Roman taxes.

It was almost as bad as it is in America, because now we are paying about 50–60 percent of what we make in taxes, and of course this was what it was there. They actually hated the Romans. So they came and asked this simple question: “Is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, or not?” It was a catch-22 situation. If He said yes, the people would disperse and have nothing to do with Him. If He said no, they would turn Him over to the authorities.

Our Lord understood their deceitfulness and answered so that they could not ensnare Him. The Bible says in verse 23, “But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Show me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar’s.”

“And he said unto them, Render therefore to Caesar the things which be Caesar’s, and unto God the things which be God’s.” Our Lord understood their deceitfulness. When He says, “Render unto Caesar the things which belong unto Caesar,” what belongs to Caesar? If you allow Caesar—or, using that term broadly, government—to tell you what belongs to them, they will take everything you have. Here is a better question: “Render to Caesar

that which belongs to Caesar, unto God that which belongs to God." What belongs to God? The answer is everything.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Even Caesar owes everything to God, because government is God's ordination, appointment, and institution. It is God who says what belongs to Caesar, and not Caesar himself. Notice verse 26: "And they could not take hold of his words before the people." They asked because it was a catch-22 situation. If He said, "Don't pay," Caesar would get Him; if He said, "Do pay," the people would desert Him.

The Second Entrapment Question: The Resurrection and Levirate Marriage

They marveled at His answer and held their peace.

The second question asked of our Lord is hilarious in one sense of the word, because it is asked by the Sadducees. Luke 20:27 says, "Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they ask him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife."

Remember that it was the Sadducees who asked this question. Acts 23:8 says, "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both." The point they were trying to make was the absurdity of believing in the resurrection of the dead. Since the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, why were they trying to discredit it and fight so hard against it? Have you noticed that the people who deny the Bible and deny God's truth are those who fight the hardest against it?

If you do not believe something, why in the world waste your time with it? Why bother with it? Yet these people did not believe in the resurrection, and they were trying to prove to Christ and to others how absurd belief in the resurrection was.

To understand this, you have to understand Levirate marriage. When Israel dwelled in Canaan, the land was divided not only by tribes but also by families. Every family had an inheritance in the land. If a woman lost her husband and had no children, then married outside the family or tribe, whatever she possessed would go outside. In order to keep the possession and inheritance inside the family and tribe, they had Levirate marriage. The brother was obligated to marry his brother's widow and raise up children unto his brother.

The interesting thing is this: They were asking our Lord, “Whose wife is she going to be in the resurrection? Because seven had her to wife.”

Our Lord demonstrates their absolute ignorance and unbelief, and their lack of Bible knowledge. God, our Lord, said there is indeed a resurrection. Jesus answered them: “The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.”

Our Lord is demonstrating that they do not even believe their own writings or know their own scripture. Consequently, He is displaying their ignorance. They were trying to box our Lord in a corner; instead, our Lord turns around and boxes them in a corner. He says, basically, “If you want to play the game, let's ask a question. Since you've done that, now it's my turn to ask a question. I'm going to ask you a couple of questions, and I want you to answer me.”

Jesus Turns the Tables: His Question About the Christ

In Luke chapter 20 and verse 41, He asks, “How say they that Christ is David's son?” Before considering this question, note verses 39 and 40. They had to admit that our Lord answered them very well: “Master, thou hast well said.” But after that, “they durst not ask him any question.”

In other words, we're finished. He's wiped us out. We don't have anything else. And so our Lord says, “All right, my turn. Here it is: How say they that Christ is David's son?”

Now, undoubtedly, this was an easy question. If they believed the Bible, it could be answered very easily with an awful lot of scriptures. But here's the problem: Everyone understood that the Messiah was to be the seed of David. They could probably answer this first question, but they would not be able to answer the second question. Everyone was going to confess that David had a son, and that seed was the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Promise of David's Seed and the Messiah

So, before getting there, let's hold Luke chapter 20 and turn back in our Bibles to 2 Samuel chapter 7. There are a number of passages we need to see, because David simply tells us what God has given him and promised him in this passage.

In 2 Samuel 7 and verse 12, you remember how David wanted to build a house for God. David said, “I live in a ceiled house, but God's in a tent and a tabernacle.” Nathan heard this and said, “Go and do all that is in thine heart, and the Lord be with thee.” Then God came to Nathan that night and said, “No, David's not going to build a house for me, because he's been a man of war and shed much blood. But his seed, his son, is going to build a house for me.” So, when you get to 2 Samuel chapter 7, God is speaking to David, and in verse 12 he says, “And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee.”

“I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.” So God says, “I’m going to set up his seed. I’m going to establish his kingdom.”

It is true that Solomon built the temple. But there is in the Bible that which is called prophetic telescoping. If I had a little telescope and trained it on Alice right now, I could see her, but in the background I would see Marshall. She would be the immediate picture, while Marshall would be farther away. When you talk about prophetic telescoping, here is an immediate picture like Solomon. Solomon was indeed a type of Christ; the Bible says that. But it is beyond Solomon, because it is talking about the true seed of David, which is Jesus Christ.

Look down in 2 Samuel 7, verse 25: “And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.”

Turn to Psalm 89 and look at verse 3. I am going to show you this in the New Testament in just a moment. I am giving you this background before we get to the second question. The first question our Lord asked is very easily answered. Psalm 89, verse 3: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.”

"Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." Note, if you would, he said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed." So God now has promised a house for David's seed. Most of us automatically think of Solomon. But if you would turn in your Bibles now to the book of Matthew chapter 1 and verse 1, the very first verse in the New Testament. Notice if you would please what the Word of God says, and I might point out very clearly in

Matthew chapter 1 and verse 1, the Bible says, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." So who then is the true son of David? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the true seed of David? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Who is the true son of Abraham? It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, with that in mind, I want you to turn now to John chapter 7, John chapter 7, and let's begin looking there with verse 41.

John 7 verse 41. Hang on, I'm going to try to tie all this together for you. John 7 verse 41. Notice if you would, please, here's what they're talking about Jesus Christ. "Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" Now it is true that Jesus Christ was born in Judea, in the southern kingdom, in Bethlehem, of the seed of David. But you remember he was carried into Egypt as a babe, came back, and they dwelt in Nazareth, which is in the northern kingdom, which is in the area of Galilee.

So he was called a Galilean. He was also called a Nazarene because he's in the northern kingdom. So now they're saying Jesus Christ is doing all these miracles and they're saying, "Wow, but this can't be the Messiah because he's out of Galilee. He's out of Nazareth. And the scripture says the Messiah is going to come out of Bethlehem. He's going to be of the seed of David."

Well, skip down, if you would, please, to verse 50. Nicodemus, of course, is the one who came to Jesus by night in John chapter 3. So notice this: "And Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

The point I am trying to make right now is this: they knew very definitively that the Messiah was to be the seed of David and that He was to be born in Bethlehem. They knew that. They knew it. Over and over it is told us.

The angel Gabriel said to Mary, “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy

womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." He continued, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

So it is true that Solomon built the temple. But it is also true that Jesus Christ raised up the true tabernacle, the true temple, with His person, with His work. And that is why Ephesians chapter 2 tells us that we are built into a house for God. The foundation, of course, is the apostles and prophets, built upon the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 110:1 and the Deity of Christ

So the truth is, when our Lord asked them in Luke chapter 20, when He asked, "How say they that Christ is David's son?" they could answer that. They knew that. It was absolutely certain. But I am going to show you something. Although this truth could have been answered very easily from just even the Old Testament, they were not going to admit this because they could not answer the next question.

In Luke chapter 20, verse 41, our Lord said, "How say they that Christ is David's son?" Now our Lord quotes the Scripture: "And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Now here is the second question: "David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?" Psalm 110 is quoted so many times in the New Testament. It is identified as "A Psalm of David." Here is the very first verse: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Now, if the Messiah is the son of David, that is one thing.

But the second question is this: If the Messiah is the son of David, how is it that David called him Lord? A father does not call his son Lord. So the question demonstrates that Jesus Christ is more than the Son of David. Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God.

Now, if you look in Psalm 110:1, where it says, "The LORD said unto my Lord," notice that the first word "LORD" is all caps, while the second word "Lord" has only a capital L. What is the difference? Anytime you see the word "LORD" with all caps in the Bible, it is the word for Yahweh or Jehovah. The second word "Lord" in Psalm 110:1 is the word Adonai. Literally, it says, "Yahweh said unto my Adonai." The word Adonai means Lord, Master, Sovereign, and Owner. Our Lord takes Psalm 110 and looks at these Sadducees, scribes, and Pharisees, asking this question: If the Messiah is David's son, how can David call him Lord? He has to be more than just the son of David. He has to be the Son of God. Obviously, they are not going to recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Yet if Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of David, according to this text He must also be the Son of God.

Before going further, let us point out several facts that need to be taken into consideration. First of all, in Luke chapter 20, Jesus Christ is acknowledging the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament because He is quoting it. He is saying, in effect, this is what the Scripture says. The second thing David is doing is testifying to the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110, as well as a lot of other Psalms. Now, David did not write all of the Psalms.

He wrote most of them. Psalm 90 was written by Moses. Asaph wrote some psalms, and the sons of Korah wrote some psalms, but most of them were David's authorship. The third thing that we see in Psalm 110 is a glimpse of what we know as the Trinity, because the Father is speaking to the Son: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." So we have the Father speaking to the Son. Later on, of course, we have the Spirit. We have only one God, but that one God has manifested Himself in three persons.

Here is another indication of the deity of Jesus Christ. When He quotes Psalm 110:1, He says, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." The right hand is known as a place of rank and honor. It is also known as a place of power and authority. All my life, I have heard fathers refer to their son as "my right-hand man"—"He's the one with me. He's the one helping me. He's the

one here.” Jesus Christ is God the Father’s right-hand man. He is seated at the right hand of God.

By the way, there is a wonderful verse in Psalm 21, on which I have preached in times past, where the psalmist said, “Thy right hand shall find out all of thine enemies.” Of course, the right hand of God the Father is none other than God the Son Himself. Here, then, is a further indication of the Messiah’s deity: He is seated at the right hand of God. Over and over, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

In Acts chapter 7, Stephen is giving his testimony and is about to be stoned and murdered by the unbelieving Jews. Notice what he says in verse 55: “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” In this instance, Jesus is standing, evidently to receive Stephen unto Himself. So, although the Bible says that Jesus Christ is seated, our Lord stood to receive Stephen unto Himself.

Now look at Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 3, again a very powerful and plain verse concerning the Lord Jesus. Read verse 2 as well, so that you can see it is speaking of the Lord Jesus.

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 1 says, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

Jesus Christ is seated on the right hand of God the Father. It is not only a place of rank and honor, but also a place and position of power and authority. That is why He said in Matthew 28 and verse 18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

The Significance of 'Until'

Now look at Luke chapter 20, verse 41: "And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son? And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?" Verse 43 says, "Till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

In Psalm 110, verse 1, and Luke 20, verse 43, God the Father invites God the Son to sit at His right hand until He makes our Lord's enemies His footstool. Have you ever thought about the word "till" or "until"? We use that word all the time and in many different ways. There is a song that we often sing: "Until then, until then my heart shall go on singing, until then with joy I'll carry on, until the day my eyes see that city, until the day that God calls me home."

We sing that all the time. We say, “Until we meet again,” “until it is time,” “until it works out,” “until I get paid,” and a host of other “untils.” The word “till,” T-I-L-L, is the shortened version of “until.” The Greek word is heōs. It occurs 148 times in the New Testament and means “until” or “unto.” It is a preposition referring to up to a time, or up to a specified time.

So look at verse 42: “And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until”—there is a specified time—“until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” First, it is an act of God the Father that subdues our Lord’s enemies. Secondly, it is God the Father who will submit and subdue the enemies of Jesus Christ to His Son. In other words, the Father is going to vindicate the Son. He is going to make sure that His enemies bow down before Him.

Now, hold Luke 20 and look at Psalm 2. Let us take the time to read Psalm 2. It is only twelve verses, but in light of what I am preaching, this is a very appropriate Psalm.

The question begins, “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” “Vain” means that which is useless or worthless. What is it they are imagining? “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the

LORD, and against his anointed," that is, the Lord Jesus, "saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us."

They do not like the limitations God has placed upon them in the institution of government. They are planning to rebel against God, breaking the bounds and bonds, and transgressing. They say, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." In other words, they are going to be a law unto themselves, doing what they want regardless of what God says.

What is God's response? "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Now look what God says to the Son: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

"Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

When all of these rebel against God, His response is this: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." He will cast them down. "Yet have I set my son upon my holy hill of Zion." In other words, He is not going to be overthrown, dispossessed, or dethroned. He is going to be vindicated and honored.

When He said in Psalm 110 verse 1, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool," the Hebrew word for "till" is shith, which literally means "to set, to place, to lay a hand upon." Thus He said to the Son, "Sit thou on my right hand until I lay my hand upon your enemies." "I will mash them down. I will bow them down. They

will bow before thee." This is why this is an act of God the Father: He is going to vindicate His Son.

First Corinthians 15 verse 25 says, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." This indicates and teaches us, first, that Jesus Christ is now ruling and reigning; and second, that He is in the act of subduing His enemies.

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, beginning with verse 7, the Word of God says: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.” This is real submission.

Here is what it will be like: “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.” When our Lord comes back, he will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon those who do not obey God or the gospel.

You remember in Philippians chapter two, the Scripture says that “in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” God is going to lay His hands upon all the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will kneel, bow, and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord.

An author commenting on when God shall make our Lord’s enemies His footstool says: “This expression, that the conquest of Christ's enemies shall be but as the removing of a stool into its place, denotes thus two things. First, the easiness of God's victory over the enemies of Christ.”

Think about the easiness of God's victories over the enemies of Christ. How difficult is it for someone like Marshall to reach down and just move a footstool? You can move the footstool with one hand. It is no big deal. It requires neither a lot of power nor a lot of

strength. Just move the footstool. If our Lord is going to put the enemies there under His footstool, it will be very easy for Him.

First, this denotes the easiness of God's victory over the enemies of Christ. They are therefore before Him as nothing, less than nothing, the drop of a bucket, the dust of a balance, a very little thing. Secondly, as this putting of Christ's enemies like a stool under the feet denotes easiness, so also it denotes order and beauty. When Christ's enemy shall be under His foot, then there shall be a right order in things. Then it shall indeed appear that God is a God of order. Therefore, the day wherein that shall be done is called the times of the restitution of all things.

The putting of Christ's enemies under His feet is an act of justice. Of all others, justice is the most orderly virtue, that which keepeth beauty upon the face of the people, as consisting itself in symmetry and proportion. This putting of Christ's enemies as a stool under His feet also denotes unto us two things in reference to Christ: first, His rest, and secondly, His triumph.

Certainly that is true. We have to understand something: Jesus Christ is the victor. Jesus Christ is the conqueror. Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is the sovereign. He will repay His enemies, and they will submit to Him and acknowledge Him as Lord. It may be in their condemnation, but they will submit to Him.

In Luke chapter 19, beginning with verse 11, we read: "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

This nobleman represents the Lord Jesus Christ. “And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom,” in other words, their animosity did not stop him, “then he commanded these servants to be called unto

him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin," literally a sweat cloth.

"For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"

"And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." You have many people today fighting against the Lord Jesus Christ. A lot of billionaires have gathered themselves together and think that somehow they are going to reset the entire world and that they have the wherewithal to control all of humanity.

SCRIPTURE READING - Acts 2:32-38 (KJV)

Application: The Certainty of Christ's Victory and the Call to Repentance

> So here is my admonition, here is my counsel. Fight all you want to fight. Hate all you want to hate. Rage against the Lord Jesus Christ as much as you want to rage. Deny Him on every turn and refuse to confess Him. And you may freely do so until—until—until He comes for you in death, until He comes for you in judgment, until you stand before Him, until God

> lays His hand upon you, and you will kneel and you will confess. He said to his Son, "Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."
>
> Because Peter is preaching on the day of Pentecost, and you're going to see Peter even quoting Psalm 110. Peter's preaching and he says, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Now, let us go back to verse 37. After Peter preaches and tells them that Jesus Christ has been made Lord and Christ, the One they had crucified, the Bible says, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

The question, “What shall we do?” is in light of what Peter had preached: God had made Jesus Christ both Lord and Christ. He is the One they had crucified. God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand until He makes His enemies His footstool. Now they are convicted, pricked in their hearts, and ask, “What are we going to do in light of these things?” Why were they so pricked? Why were they so convicted and concerned when they heard what they heard?

The answer is given in Luke chapter 23 and verse 25. You remember how Pilate tried to release Barabbas to the people. They refused: “No, no, no, we do not want Barabbas. We want Jesus crucified. We want Barabbas set free.” Barabbas was a seditionist

and a murderer. But watch this: “And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.” He delivered Jesus to their will. When Jesus Christ was in their hands, they did to Him whatever they willed. They hated Him, mocked Him, ridiculed Him, spat upon Him, rejected Him, and crucified Him.

But now God the Father has raised Him from the dead, making Him Lord and Christ, and seated Him at His own right hand, giving Him all power and authority. Suddenly these people realize, “When He was in our hands, we did to Him whatever we willed. Now we are in His hands, and He may do to us whatever He wills. We are in trouble.”

“Men and brethren, what shall we do in light of these things?” Peter said, “You better repent. You better turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.” Mark it down: folks are either going to bow in salvation or bow in condemnation, but they will bow, because everyone is now in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is Lord, He is Christ, and He is the Messiah.

You may fight against Him and rage against Him until God makes every one of His enemies His footstool. The Bible says, in 1 Corinthians 15:25, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Even now, the Lord Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning, and even now He is subduing His enemies.

I know what many are going to say: "If you really think that, just look around. Look at the people who are fighting against the Lord Jesus Christ, who are set against Him, and who are denying Him." But you also have to remember this: We walk by faith and not by sight. I know what the Word of God says. If you really want to ask some questions, look around and ask yourself: Where in the world is Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the coppersmith, Voltaire, Nietzsche, Domitian, and a host of others who hated Him and said they were going to wipe His name out?

The answer is, they are dead. And Jesus Christ is alive. Do you realize it would not take our Lord one-tenth of a second to slay all of His enemies instantly? He could bring them down overnight. Those who are fighting against Christ and denying Him can do so

until then. When God places His hands upon them and presses them down into submission, then they are going to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus Christ is God.

They should have loved Him and served Him. It will be too late, but they will bow to the honor and glory of God the Father, because He will vindicate His Son. Until God does that, there is a door of mercy open. But when God closes that door of mercy, it is too late. Until then, when God makes all of our Lord's enemies His footstool. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee.

We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Your truth. We thank You for the victory that is in the Lord Jesus Christ. We confess that He is King of kings and Lord of lords and God of gods, that He's ruling and reigning and subduing. We may not see, we may not comprehend, we may not understand, but we believe and we bow unto Thee. Father, teach us Thy word and help us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ would be exalted, His kingdom extended, His people called, and that You would be honored and glorified. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask, amen.

CHAPTER 29

What Kind Of Guide Are You?

August 24, 2023

Introduction: The Question of Guidance

In Romans chapter 2, verses 19 and 20, the Apostle Paul is talking concerning those Jews who did not believe in Jesus Christ and perverted the Word of God. He said, “And are confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which has the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.”

But notice what he said in verse 19: “And are confident that thou thyself art a guide.” Have you ever considered being a guide? Usually, when we think of guides, we think of hunting and fishing. I have a very good friend who is a history guide. He not only teaches and lectures, but carries people around to historical spots and teaches and lectures while they are there.

It might be Colonial Williamsburg, one of the battlegrounds for the War of Northern Aggression, or somewhere in England or

Scotland. He is well versed not only in American history, but in world history as well.

Speaking of historical sites, years ago I saw a cartoon featuring a historical marker that said, "Nothing happened on this site in 1684." Nothing happened on this site. But another interesting historical marker states—listen carefully—"Clay on this exact spot on the afternoon of April the 27th, 1968, a marital argument was won by the husband." Now that is a historical marker for sure. Those are very rare, very seldom.

A few years back, when I was preaching in West Virginia, Alice and I came across a Confederate battle site. We saw it on the way in, and on the way out we decided to stop and look at it. We did. Of course, it was very mountainous, and the battle line was there.

One of the main characters in that battle was a man from Sumter County, Georgia—Americus, only an hour or an hour and a half from us. I wish there had been a guide at that point who could have told us more about the battle, especially about that individual, because my great-great-grandfather, whom I joined the SCV under, was also with the Sumter Flying Artillery out of Americus, Georgia.

The Bible speaks of guides. We have just read in Romans 2, verses 19 and 20, but these were bad guides—evil guides. Of course, the Bible also teaches about good and godly guides. Usually, when we think of guides, we think of hunting and fishing. We have a dear brother in our church, Dr. Tom Holmes. He and I have shared many joys and heartaches over the years, and he is a wonderful guide in veterinary medicine. He is now retired as a veterinarian; however, he is absolutely no hunting guide.

Years ago, he and I, along with some other friends, went archery hunting in Cohutta National Wildlife Area, in the mountains of North Georgia, a very beautiful spot. We drove as far as possible, then loaded our horses and went farther into the forest and mountains until we found a place to camp and hunt. After several days, one evening just before dark, Dr. Holmes came running in with a horse and said, "I found a wonderful site that's full of bear

sign." We were archery hunting for deer, but bear season was also open. I simply remarked, "Well, that's wonderful."

"We will check it out in the morning." "No, no," he said. "There's time to do it right before dark. I know it's almost dark, but it's only fifteen minutes from here." I said, "Well, okay."

Usually when I rode, I rode bareback. I put the bridle on my horse, jumped on her back, and we went down the little road. The next thing I knew, he was turning and going higher up the mountain. I don't know if you have ever ridden a horse bareback going up a mountain, but they have to lunge and jump. My legs kept sliding back, and I would catch on her rear legs, then catch her mane and pull myself up. I was not really paying attention because I was just trying to hold on through all the lunging she was doing.

We got to the top right before dark, and sure enough, there was bear sign everywhere. I told Doc, "Well, you found this place." I said, "If you want to hunt it, that's up to you. I really wasn't paying attention on the way up here because I was just holding on. Now it's dark, and you got us up here. Now get us back to camp."

He pulled out a compass, looked at it, and said, "This way." I said, "Doc, I don't think that's the way." He said, "This is what the compass says." I said, "Okay, I'll follow you." We went a little way, and I said, "Doc, I just don't think this is the way." He checked the compass again. "Compass says this is the way." After we had gone about thirty minutes, though we should have been back in fifteen, I said, "Doc, this is not the way." He said, "The compass says this." I said, "Doc, let me ask you a question. Where did you get that compass?"

He said, "I found it on the ground." I said, "Doc, did it ever enter your mind that someone threw it away because it would not work correctly?" He said, "No, I didn't think about that." I said, "Well, all right. I'll get us back to camp. You just follow me." We had already twisted and turned in, so I figured that if I went on a straight line as best I could, I was bound to hit the road that would take us back to camp.

We were going down the mountain, and way in the distance I saw a little red dot. I looked at Doc and said, “Doc, there’s a camp up ahead, and we can get back from that camp.” He said, “How do you know there’s a camp up there?” I said, “Well, I just saw a man draw on a cigarette. I saw the little red dot.” By the way, when I was in boot camp, they told us on sentry duty—of course, I never smoked anyhow—but on a straight line, you could see a man drawing a cigarette for a mile. This was probably a good quarter to half a mile, but I saw it.

I went straight to where I saw that man drawing that cigarette, and sure enough, there was a camp. I asked him which way the River Road was. He said, “Right that way.” So we found the River Road, turned, and went back to camp. When we left camp, it was fifteen minutes. When we got back to camp, it was about two and a half hours.

So I told people, “I love Dr. Holmes. But now listen to me: if he gives you counseling advice as a veterinarian, you listen, because he knows what he’s talking about. But if he pulls out a compass, you run. Don’t follow his compass at all.” He is not a hunting guide. He and I—in fact, our families—have laughed about that experience many times. It was not funny at the time, because we were on horses with no—

—weapons, not even our archery equipment, and we were in bear territory. And bears, they love horse meat just like they do anything else. So after we got back to camp safely, it was funny, but not until then, I can assure you. So the truth is, each of us need guidance. We need to be directed. We need to be instructed. We need to be delivered. We need to be led. And the only sure and certain guide, of course, is the one true and sovereign God who's revealed himself in the Lord Jesus Christ. He's the only one promised to guide us. But he's also given us guidance by his Holy Spirit and by his Word. Now I'm sure that you remember that in the Old Testament, when the children of Israel were being led in the wilderness, that God led them with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of a cloud by day. And the Bible says in Exodus 13 and verse 22, "He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." So God led them, he

guided them, he directed them from danger and into safety and finally into the promised land. I want you to hold Romans chapter 2, but turn in your Bibles if you—

God as the Ultimate Guide

—would please, first of all, to Psalm 78. And look, if you would please, at verse 53. I want to just show you several passages that actually deal with God leading his people, and especially there in the wilderness. But in Psalm 78 and verse 53, the Word of God says this: "And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies." But note, if you would, "He led them on safely." And God always leads his people safely. Then if you will turn in your Bibles to Psalm 106 and look, if you would please, at verse 9. Psalm 106 and verse 9, the Word of God says there that "He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness." So even though they went across on dry ground, God was still leading them. Then in Psalm 107 and verse 7, Psalm 107 in verse 7: "And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." Note, "He led them forth by the right way." God always leads us in the right way. Then one more, if you look in Isaiah chapter 48 and verse 21. Isaiah—

Isaiah 48:21 says this in relationship to God's leading Israel: "And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out." So they thirsted not when he led them.

There's a hymn that we have sung for years, and it came to my mind as I was working on this message. The title of that hymn is "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah." Here are the stanzas. I want you to think about them. "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but Thou art mighty; hold me with Thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more."

The second one is this: "Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow; let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my

journey through. Strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer, be Thou still my strength and shield." And then the last one, I love this verse: "When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside. Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side. Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to Thee."

And certainly in the Bible, there's a multitude of promises. There's a multitude of precepts. Now, I want to show you some before I really get to the message I want to share with you. I just want to show you some of these promises where God is telling us that he will indeed lead us and guide us. So in Psalm 25, beginning there with verse 9, the Word of God says this: "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." Now notice, "The meek will he guide in judgment."

Now I'm going to refresh your memory on this, because several months back I went through the word "meek" with you in the Bible. The word meekness has nothing to do with being a coward, has nothing to do with being a doormat, has nothing to do with being fearful. No. The word meek refers to submission to God. It refers to submission to His law. In other words, when our Lord said, "Take my yoke upon you, for I am meek and lowly in heart," meekness refers to someone who is broken to yoke, just like an oxen is broken to yoke. Meekness is nothing less than controlled strength under God.

A meek person moves when God tells him to move. A meek person acts when God tells him to act. He does not run ahead of God. He does not run behind God. He simply moves when God tells him to move. The Bible says, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."

David says concerning God, "For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me." Again, David is asking for God's leadership and guidance.

In Psalm 32, verse 8, God says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." But notice the warning in verse 9: "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee." Why do

you put a bit and bridle in a horse's mouth? The answer is to make him obey you. That is what it amounts to.

God said, “I will instruct thee and I will teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.” Do not make Him put a bit and bridle upon you.

David says in Psalm 48, verse 14, “For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” God is never going to forsake us. That is what He promised in Hebrews 13, verse 5: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” He is our guide even unto death. If you remember Psalm 23, He is also our guide through death. He does not forsake us at death; He leads us through death.

David says in Psalm 73, verse 24, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel”—that is, with the truth—

That is revealed in the Word of God. In Jeremiah chapter 3 and verse 4, we read: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" The passage teaches what we should be crying. The guide of my youth. So God has been our guide. I could tell you how God guided me when I did not even realize it, did not know that God was guiding me, and how He preserved me so many times.

One more passage is Isaiah 58 and verse 11: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." "And the Lord shall guide thee continually."

The truth of the matter is that, as you look at some of these promises—and I say some, because I have been very selective in arranging verses so that you can see the divine guidance of God—you have to consider that God does indeed guide us providentially. When you look at these promises, you see that He guides us through His Word, through His promises, and through His precepts. He also guides us through pastor-teachers, and through the integrity which He gives us by the Holy Spirit. I want to show you that.

Look at Proverbs 11 and verse 3. Here is an interesting verse: "The integrity of the upright shall guide them: but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them." "The integrity of the upright shall guide them." How in the world does integrity guide us? Well, the answer is that integrity is instilled in us by the Holy Spirit, based upon the precepts and the counsels of God. I can give you an excellent illustration.

Guidance Through Integrity and Teachers

There was a huge pile of gravel beside the road, either put there by DOT, the Department of Transportation, or by the county. I do not know which, but it was way out in the country. Each week I had to pass that gravel. Most of you know I live on a dirt road, and I can always use gravel. I looked at that big pile and thought, “Man, that would be just wonderful. My road would be easy to get.” But I could not get that gravel because I did not know who owned it. I could not ask for it, and I could not even offer money for it.

I certainly was not going to steal it. It was not mine. But every week when I went by, the pile got smaller and smaller. I happened to have a friend who worked at the county road department, and he traveled that road as well. I said, “Tim, have you ever noticed that gravel on the right-hand side of the road, how that pile continually sinks to the ground?” He laughed and said, “Yeah.” The next thing I knew, I went by that pile, and you could not have gotten a five-gallon bucket off the ground. People had simply stolen it. That is all there is to it.

I could use gravel as much as anyone else, but I know stealing is wrong. I am not going to steal. I might need money, but I am not going to rob a bank. Why? The Bible says, “Thou shalt not steal.” “The integrity of the upright shall guide them.”

Isaiah 30:20–21 gives the reason for this. Even in the setting of “the bread of adversity” and “the water of affliction”—which means difficult times—the Lord’s teachers are not hidden. The passage says, “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction”—which means difficult times—“yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers.” In other words, these are people who teach the

truth of God. “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

How in the world would you know how to turn? How would you know where to go? Your teachers have not been hidden in a corner; they have been teaching you biblical principles. If you follow those principles, you know exactly how to act. The guidance is given through the truth of God, so that you may know the way when you turn either to the right hand or to the left.

Jeremiah 3:14–15 says, “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” Then note verse 15: “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” That is where you receive integrity. That is where you know how to act, because you have been taught the truth of God. God gives pastors according to His heart to feed His people with knowledge and understanding.

Let me pause at this point and ask some questions. First of all, is God guiding you? If He is guiding you, how are you being guided? Also, are you guiding others? What kind of guide are you?

The truth is that, in the strictest sense of the word, we are all guides. We may be guiding our children in education. We may be guiding some to salvation. We may be guiding others to condemnation and damnation. We cannot escape the concept of guidance or of being guides. Husbands are required by God to guide their wives. Wives are to guide the homes. Parents are to guide the children. Teachers are to guide their students. Pastors are to guide the churches. Statesmen are to guide the nation. Therefore, the concept of guidance and being guides cannot be overlooked or denied.

The Universal Role of Guides

The Jews whom Paul addressed in Romans 2 were bad and evil guides. In fact, these Jews were also condemned by the Lord Jesus Christ because they were hypocrites and dishonest in their teaching. Moreover, in their teaching they were actually

obnoxious. They were unbiblical and hypocritical. That is why, in Matthew 23:4, our Lord said, “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” In other words, they did not care how much they put upon others, but they were not going to put anything upon themselves. They were going to say, but they were not going to do. They were going to tell others, but they were going to restrain themselves. They were not going to do it themselves.

Evil Guides: The Hypocrisy of the Pharisees

Romans 2:19 says, “And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” They really did not have knowledge; they only had a form of it. “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?”

The passage continues: “Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.” These people were saying, “You better not steal,” and yet they were stealing. They said, “You better not commit adultery,” and yet they were committing adultery. They said, “You better not worship idols,” and yet they were committing sacrilege themselves.

Jesus Christ himself was sent to be a guide. Yes, he was sent to save his people as well. John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke chapter 1, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, speaks concerning John and concerning the Lord Jesus Christ himself. There is, in fact, so much in Luke chapter 1.

Christ and the Holy Spirit as Guides

Mary's Magnificat is found in Luke chapter 1 as well. Beginning with verse 68: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of

salvation for us in the house of his servant David"—that would be the Lord Jesus. "As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. And thou, child"—the Lord Jesus—"shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways"—that would be John the Baptist—"to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring"—that would be the Lord Jesus—"from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." That's what our Lord is doing, guiding our feet in the way of peace. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

The interesting thing is that the word "guide" here in the Greek is katathuno. It literally means to direct, to guide, and to make straight. It also refers to the removal of any hindrances. Whatever is in the way is taken out of the way.

Matthew Poole, in his commentary, said this concerning the prophecy of Zacharias: "Here Zacharias showeth us the end why God visited us with his Son, the Branch, the Light, the Dayspring, the Sun of righteousness. Men were in the darkness of sin and ignorance, dead in trespasses and sins, at war and enmity with God. Christ came to give the light of the gospel revelations, the light of spiritual comfort and salvation, to purchase peace, and to direct them how to walk that they might have peace with God and at last enter into peace."

Here is a very important truth: When God guides us, He guides us into peace, because He guides us into obedience to His law. He guides us into obedience to His Word.

Peace—real, true, genuine peace—is only given to the obedient. It is not given to the disobedient. This is why there is so much turmoil in the lives of the ungodly and the unsaved, and why there is so much turmoil in the homes. Isaiah 48:22 says, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." There is no peace.

Isaiah 57:20-21 says, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." There just is no peace. The wicked are restless, like a troubled sea that cannot rest, and their lives cast up mire and dirt. So the question must be asked: To whom does our Lord give His peace?

The answer is, to His disciples, to those who obey Him. In John 14:27, our Lord is speaking to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

There is a vast difference between what is known as worldly peace and the peace that the Lord Jesus Christ gives. Worldly peace is not the peace our Lord gives to His disciples. His peace is given to those who obey Him. Our Lord not only guides us into peace, but He gives us that peace which only He is capable of giving. His peace leaves the heart untroubled and unafraid.

Christ did not leave us alone. He was our guide on earth, but he is no longer on earth; he is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. Thus, he sends the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter and our guide.

In John 16, beginning with verse 12, our Lord said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

When the Bible tells you in verse 13, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you," the Greek word for "guide" is

hodegeo. It literally means to lead, to guide, to lead into the way, to be a guide, to be a teacher, and to give guidance unto.

Here is a good question: Have you ever sought the Holy Spirit for guidance? Have you ever sought the Holy Spirit for guidance when you read and study the Word of God? Have you ever sought the Holy Spirit for guidance as you worship God?

Understand this based upon the Scripture: It is utterly impossible to understand truth apart from the Holy Spirit. If he does not open your eyes and teach you, you do not understand. I could be the very best teacher, have the best oratory, and use the best illustrations in the entire world, but all of these are worthless without the illumination and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He has to lead us. He has to guide us.

Without the Spirit of truth, we will never see truth. In John 15:26, our Lord says, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." He said He would send the Comforter from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father. We call this the procession of the Spirit, because He proceeds from the Father and the Son.

There are two things we must absolutely know and understand. First, the Holy Spirit will never lead, guide, or direct us in contradiction to the Word of God. I have heard people speak of the leading of the Spirit and claim that the Holy Spirit led them to do something atrocious and ungodly. You may have been led by a spirit, but it was not the Holy Spirit of God, because He never leads us to do anything contrary to the truth of God. What did our Lord say? "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Whenever someone claims the leadership of the Holy Spirit while doing something wicked and wrong, it is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always leads in agreement with and conformity to the Word of God.

Second, the Holy Spirit will never lead, guide, or direct you to criticize, condemn, mock, ridicule, or reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord said, "He shall testify of me." He glorifies Christ and

takes of His. If anyone speaks wickedly and wrongly concerning Jesus Christ, it is not the Holy Spirit impressing them to do so, but a wicked, evil spirit. The Spirit of God always leads us into truth and always leads us to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

What I have described is what we would call theological guidance. Now I want to show you practical guidance from the Word of God. This is why I ask, "What kind of guide are you?"

Practical Guidance: The Wife as Guide of the House

Think about that question as we consider at least three more passages. First, turn to 1 Timothy chapter 5. This is a very interesting passage, and it needs to be truly understood. Paul is talking about how to act in the church, and here he is dealing with widows. He has dealt with the older widows earlier.

He says of the younger widows: “But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also”—that is, gossipers—“and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”

Now verse 14 says: “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” Here is an example of biblical guidance by the wife. She is indeed the queen of the house. She guides the household. She may be the guide of the house, but she is not the head of the house.

The word “guide” in this passage is a very important Greek word, oikodespoteo. That does not mean anything until we break it down. Oikos means “house,” and despoteo is where we get our English word “despot.” The wife, then, is the despot of the house. The word is used twelve times in the New Testament. It refers to God, to Christ, and also to a man as the owner of a house, distinct from a slave. Here it refers to the wife.

The wife is put forward as the ruler of the household, which is a proper recognition of her influence. She is the one who takes care

of the family within the doors, that is, inside the house. This is her sphere of authority, and she exercises it without usurping the authority of her husband as the head of the house.

If you really want to understand more of this, read Proverbs 31—read about the wise woman who rises a great while before it is day, all the things that she does, and how her husband praises her and honors her. Here is what John Gill, the Baptist theologian, said concerning this: "She is to manage domestic affairs, direct, order, and do what is proper to be done for the good of the family, which is much more commendable than to throw themselves upon the church, like the older widows, and live an idle, wanton life, and after that marry, and so on."

I think every woman in this room will agree with this. If a woman truly fulfills the duties of a wife and mother and guides and governs in the home, she will not have time to live a wanton life. Duties are time-consuming. If you do not believe that, ask Alice. She is up at 5:30 every morning and still complains that there is not enough time in the day to get everything done. That does not include taking care of me. She guides the house. That is one reason I can never leave her: I do not know where anything is. She will not pack my bag.

But one thing she does do, Dinah, I can assure you: when it comes to that dark, dark chocolate, she hides it in the back of the refrigerator, where I could not see it even if I pulled half the contents out. I asked, "Have you stopped buying dark chocolate?" "Oh, no, it's in the refrigerator." "Really? Where?" "Oh, it's back there where you can't find it." I jokingly tell everybody, "Don't feel sorry for her, because she doesn't do anything between midnight and 5 in the morning but sleep." That is the way it goes. But anyhow, that is exactly what we are talking about.

In other words, the woman has to guide the house. That is a practical illustration of biblical guidance: the wife and mother does exactly what God commands her to do.

Here is a second, very practical application. In Acts chapter 8, the Ethiopian eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning to Ethiopia. He was treasurer under Candace, the queen,

and was sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah 53. The Holy Spirit commanded Philip to draw near. We read, “And he was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?”

Practical Guidance: Philip Guides the Ethiopian Eunuch

“And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”

Note his question in verse 31: “How can I, except some man should guide me?” The word “guide” in this passage is the exact same word used of the Holy Spirit in John 15 and John 16. It is the Greek word hodegeo. Why would the same Greek word used of the Holy Spirit be used here of Philip guiding the Ethiopian eunuch? I believe the answer is twofold. First, it is the Holy Spirit who inspired the Bible to be written. It is His Word. Second, it is the Holy Spirit who must give understanding and open the eyes.

This is why I am beginning to ask: Are you a guide? And if you are, what kind of guide are you? Do you know the Word of God?

You cannot teach what you do not know, reveal what you do not know, or lead and guide in a direction you do not know. The man asked, “How can I understand this, except some man guide me?” All Philip could do was guide. That is all anybody can do; the rest is the work of the Holy Spirit of God. So there is a guide.

Practical Guidance: Judas as a Guide to Betrayal

Let me show you another passage. In Acts chapter 1, Peter is speaking. In verse 15, he says, “And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.” Judas is known as the guide to them who took Jesus: Judas the traitor, Judas the betrayer, Judas the guide.

How did Judas know where Jesus Christ was? John chapter 18, verse 1, tells us, “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.” Then it says, “And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.”

Judas knew the place. He knew where our Lord often prayed. He knew where our Lord often resorted and refreshed himself, and he led the enemies of Christ straight to him.

Where is the place today that Jesus Christ resorts? If you wanted to betray Christ, if you wanted to lead the enemies to Christ, where would you lead them? The answer would be to his church. What did our Lord say? “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Do you realize our Lord is often betrayed in his own house?

Zechariah chapter 13, verse 6, speaks of the Messiah: “And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” He says, “I got these in the house of my friends.”

Judas guided enemies to Christ so that He might be captured, mocked, whipped, and crucified. Many today guide people away from Christ by failing to be faithful, truthful, and obedient. I have known men and women who drew people away from church over senseless, stupid things because of their emotions and feelings,

with nothing to do with biblical principle. Some simply became angry and left.

What kind of guide are you? Do you realize that guiding people to Jesus, as Judas did, for the wrong reason is just as bad as guiding people away from Jesus for the wrong reason?

Conclusion: Be a Guide Who Leads to Christ

In the strictest sense of the word, everyone is a guide. You cannot deny the principle or concept of guidance. You are guiding your family, your friends, and people, often not simply by words but by example. We are either guiding people to the Lord Jesus Christ or guiding them away from Him.

I thought of a way to remind ourselves of this: if we put a little plaque over our doors, it might read, “Weaver’s Guide Service,” “Howerton Guide Service,” “Sharpless Guide Service,” or “Barley Guide Service.” You see it every day; you are guiding people, whether by truth or by example.

Judas is known as the man who was guide to them that took Jesus. I would much rather be known as the man who guided people to Jesus for the right reason than as one who guided people to Jesus for the wrong reason. I want to show you what I call the right reason.

John the Baptist was quite a preacher, that is for sure, and he was unique. But I want you to know what is said concerning John the Baptist. Here it is: "Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

So my question is, when you speak, do folks follow Jesus Christ? All John said was, "Behold the Lamb of God," and his disciples followed Jesus Christ. We need to speak, act, and live in such a way that folks will follow the Lord Jesus Christ, because we are guides, whether we like it or not.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee. We thank you for your Word and for your truth. We pray, Father, that you would indeed make us acutely aware of our guide service. Help us,

Father, to love Thee, to honor Thee, to glorify Thee, to walk in Thy truth, and to guide others unto Thee, that they may be saved, and that Thou mayest be glorified and worshiped. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 30

Jesus Christ the Troubler

July 20, 2024

Introduction: Jesus Christ the Troubler

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 2. The title of the message is "Jesus Christ the Troubler." Notice Matthew chapter 2, verse 3.

The Bible says, "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." Have you ever considered the fact that Jesus Christ is a Troubler? Yes, He is a Troubler, and no, He is not a Troubler in the sense that He is a sinner and does that which is wrong and wicked. He is a Troubler to those who reject Him, to those who hate Him, and to those who despise Him.

Achan, who is sometimes referred to as Achar in the Bible, is known as the troubler of Israel. In fact, the Bible tells us in 1 Chronicles chapter 2 and verse 7, "And the sons of Carmi; Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed." Achan was the one who stole from Jericho when God had cursed Jericho and everything that was in it. He stole the goodly Babylonish garment, the wedge of gold, and the silver, and hid

them under his tent. Achan, or Achar as he is sometimes called, was responsible not only for his own death, but also for the deaths of his family, plus thirty-six other Israelites. You may read about Achan in Joshua chapter 7.

Interestingly, the Hebrew word for troubler is Achar, which means troubler, or one that disturbs, one that stirs up, and one that troubles. Rightly so, Achan, who is oftentimes called Achar, is indeed known as the troubler of Israel.

Herod and Jerusalem Troubled

The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ also troubled Herod and all of Jerusalem. Matthew chapter 2, beginning with verse 1, says, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod was troubled. In one sense, it is very easy to understand why Herod would be troubled, but it is not necessarily as easy to understand why all Jerusalem with him would be troubled. Since Herod claimed himself to be the king of the Jews, we can understand his concern when the Magi came saying, "We've come to worship him who is the King of the Jews." Herod certainly was troubled, and then the Bible says, "all Jerusalem with him."

When you read the word "all" in the Bible, it basically has about fifteen different meanings. Many people misinterpret this word by trying to make it include each and every individual. It does not mean that. Although the Bible says "all Jerusalem with him," certainly there were exceptions. It means "all" in a very general sense, but it does not mean every single individual.

In Luke 2, we read about Simeon: "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the

Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

"And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, that is, eight days, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

Simeon was certainly not upset; he was not troubled. He was thankful and happy because he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Another individual who was not troubled was Anna: "And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day."

"And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Very obviously, there were some in Jerusalem who were happy and thankful that Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, had been born.

Now consider Matthew chapter 2 and verse 3: "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." This teaches and demonstrates the exceeding wickedness and duplicity of King Herod.

The Wickedness of Herod the Great

As you read through Scripture, especially from Matthew 1 through Acts 26, you will read about a number of Herods. They are not all the same individual. Herod Agrippa I was also a Roman-appointed ruler in Israel and was from the Herod dynasty. The Herod in Matthew 2 is known as Herod the Great, and he claimed to be the

king of the Jews. He was the one who had all the children killed who were two years of age and under, when the wise men, whom God had sent home another way, did not give him all the information.

There was Herod Antipas, or Antipas, however you would like to pronounce it, who was king during the ministry of John the Baptist and, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was Herod Antipas who had John executed, later declined to pass judgment upon Jesus, and sent Him back to Pilate in Luke chapter 23. This same Herod, Herod Antipas, sometimes simply called Herod, is also mentioned as one who was guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in Acts chapter 4 and verse 27.

When you come to Acts chapter 12 and read about the Herod who was the persecutor of the apostles, however, you are reading about Herod Agrippa I. Herod Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great. Herod the Great was the one who slaughtered the infants at Bethlehem. Herod Agrippa I was a nephew of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch who killed John the Baptist.

These Herodian kings were very vicious, very wicked, and very cruel. The Bible tells us that Herod also was troubled. The Greek word for trouble happens to be tarassō. It means to be agitated, disturbed, upset, or disquieted. It also means to be struck with fear and dread. When you say the word “trouble,” it is exactly the opposite of what you and I would call calm and peace.

Consider another use of this word in Matthew chapter 14 and verse 26, in the lives even of the apostles: “And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled.” They were afraid and cried out, saying, “It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.” Here the word “troubled” clearly means to be troubled with fear and troubled with dread.

Herod was troubled because Judea at this time was a province of the Roman Empire. Herod had been made king by the Romans, and he had reigned for 37 years. Herod happened to be a very ruthless, murdering tyrant. The Romans had taken Jerusalem by force and had made Herod the Great king. Herod wanted to retain his kingship and his rule, and therefore he was willing to

murder—not only innocent children under two years of age, but also his own family if there were rivalries and jealousies in his life.

Herod, in his rage over his family rivalries and jealousies, put to death the two sons of Mariamne, who was his wife, Aristobulus and Alexander. Then he killed Mariamne herself, Antipater, another son who was once his heir, besides the brother and mother of Mariamne, and her grandfather, John Hyrcanus. He made will after will, but now was in the fatal illness and fury over the question of the Magi.

He showed his excitement, and the whole city was upset, undoubtedly because the people knew only too well what he could do in a rage over the disturbance of his plans. The foreigner and the usurper feared a rival, and the tyrant feared the rival would be welcome. Why was he called a foreigner, and why was he called a usurper? Because Herod the Great was an Idumean, or an Edomite.

This is from where all the Herods actually sprang. Herod claimed to be king of the Jews, and consequently he was not going to brook any rivals. He would destroy anyone who stood in his way. In Matthew chapter 2, verses 16 through 18, we read: “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”

Herod was an exceedingly wicked and duplicitous man. He told the wise men, “You bring him back. You bring back word to me where he is, so that I may come and worship him.” He had no plans of worshiping Jesus Christ. He only had plans on murdering him.

Why would not Jerusalem be excited at the news that the King of kings, the King of the Jews, was born? Why were they really that terrified of Herod?

Ignorance and Slavery in Jerusalem

Fear certainly had a place in their lives. They probably all knew how wicked, horrible, and terrible Herod the Great could be. But I also think they had become accustomed to tyranny and slavery. There was another reason: what you and I would call ignorance. They did not know their Bible or their prophecies concerning the Messiah. They knew nothing of the promised deliverances. They were basically ignorant concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the Messiah.

Look at Matthew 2:4–6. “And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.” Note what Herod had to do to find out: he had to gather together the chief priests and scribes. The people themselves did not know; they were basically ignorant.

I believe this is one of the problems we have in our day and time—the same problem in a different light. The Old Testament covenant people did not know about Jesus Christ or the messianic promises. Now remember that the New Testament covenant people, the church of Jesus Christ, are still just as ignorant. Find an average church member and ask, “Where in the Bible are the prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ?” Ask about the very first prophecy in the Bible. Ask where Jesus Christ was to be born and where it is found in the Bible. Ask where it is found that He is to be born of a virgin. Ask where it is found that He is to have one who precedes Him, preparing the way for Him in the life of John the Baptist. I am simply saying that most people are absolutely ignorant.

There are very few Christians who can explain what you and I would call the basic fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Just as those Old Testament covenant people were ignorant concerning Jesus Christ and His prophecies, so likewise today most professing Christians are just as ignorant. We should be theologians, but in reality we are mostly completely ignorant of the truths of

Christianity. Let me put this out: ignorance is only conducive to slavery.

The ignorance of the populace in Matthew chapter 2 is comparable to the ignorance of the church concerning Jesus Christ. One would think that Jerusalem should be rejoicing over the birth of Jesus Christ instead of being troubled. It is interesting when we observe that men become accustomed to slavery. We become accustomed to tyrants. Just look at America. We are not ruled by the Word of God today. We are not even ruled by our Constitution. The truth of the matter is that we have simply become adjusted to tyranny and to slavery. Men do not like change, especially if that change is going to be dramatic and demanding.

Christ Troubles Tyrants

Jesus Christ is very troubling to tyrants. According to Scripture, He has to be. He is troubling to those who refuse to submit to Him, bow to Him, and acknowledge Him. The reasons given in the Bible for tyrants' hatred of Him are simply their own selfishness and their desire to rule over everyone according to their whim and will, while at the same time refusing to be ruled themselves. In other words, they want to be a law to themselves, they want to play God, and they think they have a divine right to rule. Look at Klaus Schwab. Look at George Soros. Scripture tells us that such tyrants are wicked and wrong.

Psalm 2 asks, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" It continues, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." In other words, tyrants do not like any limitations placed upon them at all.

It was God who created this world. It is God who created government. It is God who laid down the laws and rules for those who rule over men. But tyrants do not look like that.

In Hosea chapter 5, verses 10 and 11, we read: “The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound.” That is, they did not

like the limitations God placed upon them. Like the kings in Psalm 2, they did not like those limitations. “Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.” God said, “I’ll destroy them because they are removing the boundary.”

“Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment.” Why? “Because he willingly walked after the commandment.” That is the commandment of those who violated the limitations God placed upon them.

Now, in America, we have not only turned away from the law of God; we have turned away from our own Constitution. We are now a nation basically without law, except for the fact that we are ruled over by idiots who believe they can simply make up laws, rules, and regulations as they go along, going deeper into tyranny and enslaving us deeper into slavery. I want you to witness what is happening in America. Tyrannies exist. Tyrants pass laws, rules, and regulations for the peasants and the peons, and then exempt themselves.

It is just like George Orwell told in his book Animal Farm. If you have never read Animal Farm, I would encourage you to read it. It is a delightful book exposing tyrants. All the animals did not like the farmer or his wife. Finally, the farmer and his wife were taken care of, and two huge pigs, Napoleon and Snowball, moved into the farmer’s house because it had a list of rules: “All animals are equal.” But now Napoleon and Snowball are living in luxury, ruling over all the other animals. The animals say, “Wait a minute, something’s not right.” They look again at the rules. Number one is this: “All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.”

That is exactly the attitude in this day and time. If you and I did what our Congress critters do, we would be on trial, found guilty, in prison, thrown under the prison, and probably never ever get out. I am simply saying that is where we are.

You remember—he is dead now—there was a state representative here from Florida. He was a black man; I forget his name right now. He was asked, “What are the rules in Congress?” His response was, “There are no rules. We make them up as we go along.” Basically, that is true.

Now, tyrants do have a right to be troubled. Tyrants do have a right to fear. Tyrants do have a right to expect judgment. The tyrants, the kings of the earth, want to cast their chains from themselves and rule and do as they please. Psalm 2 says: “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” In other words, you had better make peace with the real, true King of kings.

Judgment on Herod Agrippa I

Herod Agrippa I learned this truth the hard way. He was the grandson of Herod the Great. In Acts chapter 12, beginning with verse 20, the Bible says, "And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country." And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

"And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Here was a tyrant who tried to rule as God, stealing God's honor and glory. He was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost. So worms got him while he was alive, and worms got him after he was dead.

That's a fact. Now, I want you to know it was God who slew the tyrant. That's what the Scripture means when he says, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry with thee, and ye perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." It was God who smote him with worms.

What happened after God slew the tyrant? "But the word of God grew and multiplied." Do you understand that God will remove each and every obstacle that stands in the way of His will and His purpose? Those who reject, refuse, and repudiate Him will be removed in judgment.

Tyrants do have a right to tremble and to fear. The world may be troubled, and tyrants may be troubled, but one thing that troubles tyrants is that God's people do not obey them. Acts chapter 5 spells it out in verses 27 through 29:

"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

Basically, what they were saying was, "We're not going to obey you; we're going to obey God."

There is another aspect taught in the Bible concerning Jesus Christ as a Troubler. He is not only a Troubler to tyrants and to those who hate and despise Him; He is also a Troubler in the sense that He comes to some homes and saves some and not others. Matthew chapter 10, beginning with verse 34, records what our Lord said:

Christ Divides Families

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or

daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward; and whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Our Lord came not to send peace on earth, but a sword. He said, “I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.” Our Lord gives this from Micah chapter 7 and verse 6: “For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.”

Christ being a Troubler in the home is made manifest in the lives of many people and families. Jesus Christ is a divider. Jesus Christ brings a sword. Jesus Christ separates. He is a Troubler in the sense that those who are not saved are not in league with those who are saved, even though they may be in the same family.

I preached for 59 years. In that time, I saw many families where father and mother were pitted against their children, children against father and mother, husbands against wives, wives against husbands, and in-laws against in-laws. Why? Because some were saved and the others were not saved. It created division and trouble. There was no peace in that family.

As much as you love your physical, natural family, those of us who have been saved usually have a closer bond with our spiritual family than with our physical family, especially if that physical family is unconverted. It is astounding. You would much rather be around people who believe, know, and understand the truth than those who want to fuss and fight all the time, think you are crazy, a nut, or a fanatic, and say all of this.

Simply because there is a division, Christ said, “Do not think that I've come to bring peace. I've come to bring a sword.” The unsaved will count Jesus Christ as a Troubler, but those of us who are saved will count Him as a Savior and a Deliverer.

Believers Translated into a New Kingdom

In Colossians chapter 1, verses 12 through 14, the Bible says, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

Verse 12 tells us that the Father has made us acceptable to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Then, in verse 13, He tells us that He has delivered us not only from the power of darkness, but has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

First Peter chapter 2, verses 1 through 3, says, “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

What did we just see in these verses? We have been born into a different family. We've been born into the family of God. We've been translated out of darkness into light, and out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We are different. We do have a new family, a new kingdom, and a new King. That is for sure.

It is not that we hate our physical families. We do not dismiss them or disdain them. We love our physical families, and we pray for them, that they would repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. However, salvation has placed us in a different family, in a different kingdom, and in a different country. It's just that simple. It does not matter what they call us. We understand a simple fact: We see, and they do not see. We hear, and they do not hear. We understand, but they do not understand.

It is absolutely wonderful when you have a saved husband, a saved wife, and saved children. God usually places His elect in households. That is what the Bible says, and it is usually true, but not necessarily always true. If you have a family that are saved, you may count yourself blessed in the Lord and be thankful to Him.

The Believer's Call to Not Be Troubled

Now, I want to remind you of a second admonition concerning what the word "troubled" means. It is the Greek word tarassō, and it means to be agitated, disturbed, upset, disquieted, or struck with fear and dread. It is the opposite of calm peace. Follow me in the Scriptures, and let me show you how this word is applied to believers. Turn, first of all, to Luke chapter 24, beginning with verse 36. Every one of these passages has the same Greek word, tarassō.

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." This is right after the resurrection. "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Why are you agitated? Why are you disturbed? Why are you disquieted? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."

"And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?" Jesus Christ asked them, "Why are you troubled?" Now turn to John chapter 14, a passage everyone knows. Our Lord says, "Let not your heart be troubled." It is the same word, tarassō. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Now look what He says: "Let not your heart be troubled." Do not be anxious, disquieted, or fearful. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And then He gave us these wonderful promises.

In John 14:27, He says: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Isn’t that interesting? Over and over, He tells us that our hearts are not to be troubled. We are not to be disquieted or fearful.

Look at 1 Peter 3:14–17: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear; having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.”

But note what he said: “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.” Do not be fearful. You are not to be agitated or disquieted. No, no.

Now, why is it that all through the New Testament we are told that we are not to be troubled? I can assure you one thing: every Christian has been troubled. We are sometimes some of the most fearful, agitated, unhappy, disbelieving people on the face of the earth. And any time we get troubled, we usually get fearful. Why does God tell us that we are not to be troubled?

Look in your Bibles to John 12, verses 27 and 28. Here is the same Greek word, tarassō. Our Lord said, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name.” Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” What did our Lord say? “Now is my soul troubled.” Why is it that we should not be troubled? Because Jesus Christ, who is our substitute, was troubled in our stead.

The first thing is this: Christians should not be troubled in the sense that tarassō means—to be agitated, disquieted, fearful, and full of dread. Why should we not be troubled? Why should we not

be fearful? Do you remember what 1 Peter chapter 5 and verse 7 states? “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

Application: Trouble Not Your Heart

Many Christians say, “The problem that really upsets me is that people hate me.” Really? Jesus Christ was hated. “People despise me.” Jesus Christ was despised. “People mock me.” Jesus Christ was mocked. “People ridicule me.” Jesus Christ was ridiculed. “But I’m poor.” Jesus Christ was poor. He did not have a place to lay His head. He said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” “People betray me.” Jesus Christ was betrayed.

The point is that Jesus Christ, who suffered in our stead, went through every conceivable thing that you and I, as men, go through ourselves. He was weary and tired. John chapter 4 says, “He being weary, sat thus on the well.” And now He says, “Let not your heart be troubled.” That is for sure. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Why should we be troubled if our Lord has been troubled for us?

Once again, troubled means tarassō: to be agitated, disturbed, upset, disquieted, and full of fear and dread. It is the opposite of peace and calmness.

Our Lord says, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” The first word “let” is the same Greek word for trouble. Literally, what He says is, “Trouble not your heart to be troubled.” If you are troubled, you are anxious. If you are anxious, you are anxious needlessly. Why? We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Whatever issues we have, we have to know that God is absolutely sovereign and in total control. He never allows anything to come to pass in our lives except that which is for our good and ultimately for His glory. Therefore, He says, “Trouble not your heart to be troubled.” Don’t let your heart trouble you.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled,

neither let it be afraid." Don't be troubled. If you are a child of God, you are to enjoy the peace of God and the calmness of spirit, knowing that you love and trust your Heavenly Father. Anytime that we have things go wrong, or things that we think go contrary to us, it is an opportunity to trust God, to trouble not ourselves.

The last application is this: If you are unsaved, if you are outside of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have every right to be troubled. If you are a tyrant, you have every right to be troubled. If you are outside of Jesus Christ, your troubles will be mainly resolved upon repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. But that does not mean that you will never have problems. It does mean that in those problems, during those problems, and through those problems, you can have peace, calmness, and assurance that God will work everything out for your good and for His glory.

So Christ does trouble tyrants. He troubles those that hate Him, and He is going to be a Troubler to those who die without Him. But for the child of God, He tells you, "Trouble not your heart to be troubled." Isn't that amazing? Trouble not your heart. Don't get agitated. He will work everything out for your good and His glory. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for Your love, grace, and mercy. Thank You, Father, that You are a Troubler in the sense, Lord, that You trouble tyrants and sinners. And Lord, You trouble us sometimes in order to enable us to increase our faith, increase our trust, rest in Thee, and experience Your divine peace and calmness. Lord, help us understand this simple truth: trouble not our hearts to be troubled. Give us Your grace and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 31

The Power and Influence of a Wife

April 23, 2025

Introduction and God's Order of Authority

All right, well, let's open our Bibles today, if you would, to 1 Kings chapter 21. And we're just going to be reading verse 25. 1 Kings 21 verse 25. The title of the message, listen carefully, is "The Power and the Influence of a Wife." So, Justin, you need to pay close attention. And if Catherine's listening, so does she. All right, so look in 1 Kings chapter 21 and verse 25.

The Word of God says, "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." Now, we're going to be coming back to this verse momentarily. But let me just begin by saying there are many jokes and laughable traits about wives, just as there are many jokes and laughable traits about husbands. One of the most frequent ones that I've heard all of my life was where the husband said to his wife, "Do not forget, I am the head of this house."

And she meekly responded, "Yes, know that you're the head of the house, but please do not forget that I am the neck of the house and the neck always turns the head." And certainly there is more truth to that old joke than you can imagine. God does indeed have an order. In fact, you get God's order in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 3, where the Apostle Paul wrote, "But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God." So God's order in this world is God the Father, God the Son, Jesus Christ, man, and then woman. 1 Timothy chapter 2 gives us further illumination on this truth. So if you would turn there very quickly, but hold 1 Kings chapter 21. But in 1 Timothy chapter 2, beginning there with verse 8, here's what the Word of God says.

Beginning with verse 8, 1 Timothy 2:8 says, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and without doubting." The interesting thing is that 1 Timothy 3:15 is the key verse for this book. First Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are known as the pastoral epistles. In chapter 3, verse 15, the apostle writes, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth." The Apostle Paul is telling each one of us how we are to behave ourselves in the house of God. Returning to chapter 2, verse 8, he says, "I will therefore that men pray everywhere"—that is, in the church—"lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting."

The interesting thing about this verse is the word "men." There are two Greek words that are very well-known; at least one of them is: "anthropos." That is where we get the word "anthropology," the study of mankind. "Anthropoi" would be the plural, and "anthropos" or "anthropoi" would include men and women. But in verse 8 the second word is used, the word "aner" for men, which means a man, and man only, in contradistinction to a woman. Thus he says, "I will that men pray everywhere in church, lifting up holy hands without wrath and without doubting." Men should be leading in church, and you will see why.

In verse 9 he says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety;

not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but which becometh women professing godliness with good works." Then he says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection."

That cuts out all women preachers, because the woman is to learn in silence with all subjection. He continues, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The theme is how to behave yourself in the church of God. There can be no women preachers without usurping authority over the man; they are rather to be in silence. Then he says, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Reasons for the Woman's Position

“Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” The interesting thing is this: God has given us His order, and that is God the Father, God the Son, man, and then woman. Here are two reasons given in this passage why the woman is placed under the man. First, verse 13 says, “For Adam was first formed and then Eve.” In other words, there is the creation order. The man was created first, and then the woman. The second reason, given in verse 14, is that “Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” In other words, the woman was away from her husband, was deceived, actually sinned, and was seduced by the serpent. The sin, however, came through Adam because God had entered into a covenant with Adam. That is why Romans 5:12 tells us, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Years ago, I preached a whole series on the family. I think there were either eleven or twelve messages in that series, and one of them was titled “Creation Differences.” I am certainly not going to preach that message again today, but God has created differences between men and women, and these differences often prove contentious. One of the standard jokes men usually tell is, “There are two ways of dealing with a woman. And neither one of them

work." Women, I have heard, say, "Men, you can't live with them and you can't kill them."

I can see those looks; I know. But these creation differences are not only physical. They are sometimes mental and sometimes emotional, and these differences, which God created, cause arguments and misunderstandings as well. Yet God has specifically designated the husband as the head of the house, or more specifically, the head of the woman, because in marriage the husband represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and the woman represents the Church. Just as the Church is in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, so the wife, who represents the Church, is to be in subjection to the husband.

Submission in Marriage Reflects Christ and the Church

Let me make a statement, and I am going to show it to you from the Bible momentarily: a wife who is not in submission to her husband biblically is not in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, part of her submission to her husband is her submission to Jesus Christ. I want you to turn in your Bible to the book of Ephesians, chapter 5, but as you turn there, let me point out that it is not just the wife who is to be in submission. It is also the husband, because the husband is to be in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. No one escapes submission. In fact, 1 Peter tells us that we are to be submitting ourselves one to another.

And the fact of the matter is, just because the wife is commanded to be in submission does not make the husband a dictator; it does not make the husband a tyrant, because he himself is to be in submission to Jesus Christ. When a husband loves his wife the way the Lord Jesus Christ loves the church—that is, singularly, sincerely, and sacrificially—it is easy then for a wife to be in submission to her husband.

Just as Jesus Christ does not dismiss the church, does not ignore the church, and still loves the church regardless of our faults, failures, and sins, so likewise the husband is to continue to love his wife even in spite of her faults and failures. Now, as you look in Ephesians chapter 5, look beginning there with verse 22.

Ephesians 5 and verse 22 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.” Now look at this: “as unto the Lord.” So part of a woman’s submission to her husband is her submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He explains why: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Then he says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself."

This passage shows us exactly the position of the wife and the position of the husband. Verse 33 says, "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." The husband is to love his wife even as Christ loved the church. But what does it mean that the wife is therefore to reverence her husband? The truth of the matter is that loving our wives as ourselves is much easier when the wife honors, respects, and reverences her husband.

There should be no cutting, sarcastic, or belittling remarks, or any angry tonal patterns from the wife, which are opposite of honor and respect.

The standing that the husband and wife have, or the man and the woman, before the Lord is equal. Both the husband and the wife are God's creatures, so there is an equality in standing in creaturehood. Secondly, the husband and wife have an equal standing before the Lord as sinners. Both are sinners. Thirdly, the husband and wife have an equal standing before the Lord in the fact that each one may be redeemed by the grace of God. Each one is a creature, each one is a sinner, and each one may be redeemed. However, just because there is an equal standing does not mean that everyone has the same position. God has given what we call positional authority, or a positional structure.

Equal Standing, Different Positions

That is why in 1 Corinthians 11:3 he tells us that it is God the Father, Jesus Christ, the man, and then the woman as well. We may have the same standing, but not the same positions. Each of us has heard the old adage, “There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians.” It means that everybody wants to give orders and no one wants to do the work. No one wants to be in submission or lower down on the totem pole, so to speak. But we are not lower down on the totem pole, even positionally.

When you stop and think about this, Jesus Christ came in submission to God the Father. That is why he said in John chapter 14, “My Father is greater than I.” How could Jesus Christ say that if He was God in the flesh? Because Jesus Christ came as a servant. The Father sent Him. He also said in John 10, “I and my Father are one.” Although He was equally God, when God sent Him as the Messiah and the Redeemer, His position was that of a servant. Therefore He took the form of a servant, served, and obeyed the Father. Likewise, when our Lord was a child, He was in submission to His parents.

Simply because you are in submission does not mean that you are not counted whole in the eyes of the Lord. Everyone is in submission. That is why 1 Peter 2 tells us that we are to be submitting ourselves one to another. No one escapes submission; that is the truth. Equal standing before God does not mean that we have the same positions before God. A woman’s being under the authority and submission of the man does not mean that she has no influence or what we would call power. This influence and power can be used either in a bad sense or in a good sense. Look back in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Kings chapter 21 and verse 25. There you will see this power and influence used very obviously.

Negative Example: Jezebel's Evil Influence on Ahab

In an evil sense, look again at 1 Kings 21:25: “But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.” Ahab was the wickedest king in the northern kingdom. We need to take note of

what God says concerning him. First of all, God says, “There was none like unto Ahab.” In other words, Ahab was the epitome of wickedness. Even as wicked as Jeroboam was in making the calves, Ahab excelled him in wickedness. Jeroboam was second place to Ahab, that is for sure. There were no kings in the northern kingdom that could top his wickedness. He was first and foremost. He was not only evil, but he married a woman that was more cunning and more evil than he was.

In 1 Kings 16:31, we read, “And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” Pay close attention to how God says this. Ahab followed Jeroboam in the sins of those calves that he set up in Dan and Beersheba. At least that was set up supposedly in the name of the Lord. It was not; it was idolatry. But look at what it says: “And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.” So he went then from the worship of the calves of Jeroboam to the blatant worship of Baal.

He married a heathen woman, which was forbidden by God. Note also that her father’s name was Ethbaal, and her name was Jezebel. In other words, “Baal”—B-E-L and B-A-A-L—refer to the same false god. They were named after this false god. Thus he went from the worship of those golden calves to the worship of Baal, and he married this wicked, wicked woman.

Adam Clarke said concerning Ahab's marriage to Jezebel, “This was the head and chief of his offending. He took to wife not only a heathen, but one whose hostility to the true religion was well known and carried to the utmost extent.” Then he gives six reasons. Number one, she was the idolatrous daughter of an idolatrous king. Number two, she practiced idolatry openly. Number three, she not only countenanced it in others, but protected it and gave its partisans honors and rewards. Number four, she used every means to persecute the true religion. Number five, she was hideously cruel and put to death the prophets and priests of God. Number six, in all this she acted with the utmost zealous perseverance and relentless cruelty.

Jezebel was an extremely wicked woman. Jezebel, at least that name, is used in Scripture to portray any woman who is vicious, vile, and idolatrous. For instance, in the book of Revelation, chapter 2 and verse 20, when God is speaking to the church, he says, “Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.” Here is a woman in the book of Revelation designated as Jezebel. The Jezebel who married Ahab had been dead for years and years, but another woman was called Jezebel because she was essentially doing and pushing the same idolatry and wickedness.

Here is a second thing about Ahab. First Kings 21:25 says, “But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.” So he sold himself to work wickedness. Sin is slavery; sinning is selling oneself into servitude. Sinning against God became Ahab’s trade and business, and he worked hard at rebelling against God. He was not only a slave to his sin, but also a slave to Jezebel, his wicked wife. The Bible says it like this in Romans chapter 6 and verse 16: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Whomever you obey, you are his servant, his slave.

Take note in verse 25 of the power and the influence of Jezebel over Ahab. The Bible says, “But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.” He was already wicked and vile, yet he was not wicked enough or vile enough for her. She wanted him to become more wicked and more vile. The Hebrew word for “stirred” there is the word “kuth.”

And it means to incite, to allure, to instigate, to entice, to stir up, to persuade and provoke. We could say it another way: It means to inflame. She stirred him up. She set him on fire in rebellion against God. She is the one who instigated the murder of Naboth and his sons. She is the one who persecuted the prophets of God. She is the one who fed and pampered the prophets of Baal. She is the one

who threatened to murder Elijah. She is the one who encouraged Ahab to rule ruthlessly and cruelly.

A good example of that is found in 1 Kings chapter 21. And that is when Ahab wanted the garden of Naboth. He said to Naboth, “Look, this garden is close by my palace and I’d like to have it for a garden of herbs. I will either pay you money for it or I will trade you another garden spot, which is better.” And you know what Naboth said? “God forbid it me.” Now, it wasn’t that Naboth was trying to be cantankerous. He wasn’t trying to beg for a higher price. He simply said, “God forbid it me.” And God did forbid him to sell it. Why?

That was the possession of Naboth's family, but the property actually belonged to God. Naboth and his sons were merely stewards of that particular property. When Naboth refused to sell it, Ahab came in and turned himself to the wall, lying down like a spoiled child, and refused to eat. When Jezebel came in, she asked, “What's wrong with you?” He answered, “Naboth won't sell me his property.” Then she said, “Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

How did she give him the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite? She sent letters to the city in which he dwelled and commanded them to hold a feast and set Naboth up on high. Then they were to have two men, children of Belial, come in and say, “We heard him curse God and curse the king,” and then take him out and stone him. Her reasoning was that if you curse God, you deserve to die; if you curse the king, you deserve to have your property confiscated.

That is exactly what they did. Not only did she murder Naboth, she also murdered his sons, and she did this under the name, auspices, and authority of Ahab. She wrote the letter and put his seal upon it. She had to murder not just Naboth, but also his sons, because they would have inherited the property. When God had killed Ahab—remember, an arrow went through him in his chariot—and he was to be dumped in the plat where Naboth was killed, God said, “Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the

plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord." So she murdered not just Naboth but also his sons as well.

Historical Example: Peggy Shippen and Benedict Arnold

I am sure that each one of you has heard the name Benedict Arnold. I hope you remember that Benedict Arnold was a traitor, a treasonous individual who betrayed his country during the American War for Independence. Have you ever wondered what motivated him to do such? What in the world would motivate a man to betray his own country? While he was commander in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Benedict Arnold became captivated by a woman named Peggy Shippen. Peggy Shippen was the daughter of a wealthy, loyalist-leaning judge. Benedict Arnold and Peggy were married in 1779.

Arnold incurred a lot of debt trying to keep his wife in the lavish style to which she was not only accustomed but was enriched by her father's wealth. While she was married to Benedict Arnold, Peggy maintained communication with a British spy, a young and handsome man named Major John Andre. Peggy wanted her husband to meet with Major Andre. Andre had stayed on in Philadelphia, pretending to be a civilian, which he was not. After a year of coaxing, begging, and pleading, Peggy succeeded in getting Benedict Arnold to meet with Major Andre. By August 30, 1780, Benedict Arnold had openly agreed with John Andre to betray West Point into the hands of the British—the West Point that is still in existence today. Not only did he agree to betray West Point, but he was going to do so on the very day George Washington was visiting West Point.

Thus, George Washington, the Commander-in-Chief, would have been captured as well. Thankfully, the plot was discovered. George Washington was not captured, and neither was West Point delivered into the hands of the Loyalists or the British. But here is what I want you to understand: it was his wife who goaded him, coaxed him, and pressured him to betray his country. I do not care if you want to call that influence or power; whatever you call it, she

was responsible for his betraying his country. Here is the power and influence of a wife.

Negative Example: Solomon's Wives Turned His Heart

Now look in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Kings chapter 11. Let me show you this again. We will read the first three verses and then skip down and read some more. I am showing you again the power and influence of a wife. “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians”—remember Ethbaal was a Zidonian—“and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord had said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.” His wives turned away his heart. They turned him into idolatry and actually caused him to lose his kingdom as well as the blessings of God. Thankfully,

Not all wives are that wicked, but notice this. Someone once said, “Poor Solomon, poor Solomon. Can you imagine 700 wives and 300 concubines?” Then they imagined Solomon taking a shower and finding a thousand pair of pantyhose hanging over the shower rod. I would say, poor, poor Solomon. But can you imagine having to pay for a thousand pair on a regular basis? Wow.

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtaroth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom”—or Moloch—“the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their

gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant."

It was his wives that turned away his heart. It was his wives that caused him to lose that kingdom and the blessings of God as well. That is power. That is influence. Those were the wives that turned away his heart. Thankfully, not all wives are like that.

Positive Example: Winning an Unbelieving Husband Without a Word

Another picture is given to us in the New Testament in 1 Peter chapter 3. Beginning with verse 1: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

This is an interesting passage because there is so much truth here. In 1 Peter 3, you have a godly woman married to an unsaved or ungodly man. If she had married him as a saved woman, it would have been unbiblical. In all probability, both of them were unsaved, and God saved her, but He has not saved the husband as of yet. Perhaps she was lost when they married; I do not know. But the husband in this passage will not listen to the Word of God. He

will not listen to preaching. He will not read or study the Bible, and he will not go to church.

How shall he hear? We know that you must hear the Word of God: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). If he will not read the Bible, if he will not listen to teaching and preaching, how will he hear? The answer is that he will hear by observing and watching his godly, obedient wife.

Look back at verse 1: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." The word "word" in this passage is the Greek word "logos." That is the word used of our Lord in John chapter 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"—the Logos. But the word "logos" is also used in the Bible, not just in reference to Jesus Christ, but in reference to what you and I would call doctrine or teaching.

Here is a man who simply will not listen to the teaching of the Word of God. If he will not listen to that teaching, how does he hear? It is through the conversation of his wife. Look again at verse 1: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." Then, in verse 2, he says it again: "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."

The word "conversation" does not mean talking. It certainly does not refer to arguing, nagging, belittling, and being sarcastic. It is the Greek word "anastrophe," meaning a manner of life, conduct, behavior, or deportment. In other words, it is not simply what you say; it is how you live and how you respond to the Word of God. Of course, conversation between husbands and wives may include talking, but more specifically Peter is speaking here about godly living and obedience.

Notice also the word "chaste": "while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." "Chaste" is the Greek word "agnos," meaning pure, chaste, clean, clear, and righteous. It means being pure from carnality, seeking to be free from every sin

and every fault condemned by the Word of God. This is the same word used in Philippians chapter 4 and verse 8 for "pure."

Paul says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things.” The word “pure” and the word “chaste” are basically synonymous.

Now look at 1 Peter 3:1: “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.” Notice the word “won”—W-O-N. They may be won by the conversation of the wives. The Greek word here is “kerdaino,” and it means to acquire, to gain, to win one over to the kingdom of God. We are talking about the power and the influence of a wife.

Here is a godly woman living with an unsaved, ungodly man. What God is saying is that if she will live before this man in godly obedience, she will be able to win him into the kingdom of God. Now notice that he says in verse 2, “While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.” There is another attribute that has to be added. We have talked about the conversation, and we have talked about the chaste conversation. Now it says that it has to be a chaste conversation coupled with fear. What does this mean, and to whom is fear to be extended?

The Meaning of Reverence and Fear

The Greek word here is “phobos.” It is where we get our English word “phobia”—hydrophobia, a fear of water. A phobia is a fear or a dread, and that is the way the word is normally used. However, it means more than that. It refers to reverence and honor. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” It is not just a dread or a fear that God is going to judge us. It is reverence, respect, and honor that we have for Him.

Now look back at Ephesians 5:33, where this is applied: “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular”—talking about the husbands—“so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” The word “reverence” is the same

word, except that it is the verb instead of the noun. “Phobos” is the noun; “phobeo” is the verb. Is the wife to be in dread of her husband? No.

Is she to stand in fear of him? No. But she is to honor him and reverence him. That is what it means. The wife makes sure that she reverences her husband.

The word “reverence”—the same Greek word—means to venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience. So let us go back to 1 Peter chapter 3 and ask a question that may be in your mind. In this picture, you have a godly woman married to an ungodly man. How can a godly woman honor and reverence an ungodly man?

If you are a Christian, I can give you a very simple answer: because God commanded it. The Bible says that you are to honor the face of the old man. It says children are to honor their parents. Is every parent honorable? No. Is every old man honorable? No. “Honor the king.” Is every king honorable? No. I could say, “God commands it; that settles it.” That is true, but there are other reasons. You must obey because God commands you to obey, and if you do not obey, you are disobedient.

Think about the implication. If you do not honor or reverence your husband, then not only are you disobedient to God, but in reality you are destroying your own marriage and family. There is a positive application, and there is also a negative application. The second answer is not merely that God commanded it, but that God has ordained the man, or the husband, as your head. You are under his authority, and you must honor the position and the office of authority because God established it. It is true that if you want to be honored, you must live an honorable life. But the position and office must be honored even if the individual is dishonorable, because God ordained the position and the authority. The husband, then, may not be what you want or desire him to be.

God has ordained the man to be the head, and he holds the office and position of authority. Many women marry men thinking they are going to change them. The truth is, no woman can change

a man; only God can change a man. No man can change a woman; only God can change a woman. But we still must honor the office and authority of the position.

In the providence of God, you married him. Marriage is a ministry. In 1 Peter chapter 3, God is telling you that if you have an ungodly or unsaved husband—or, conversely, if a godly man has an unsaved wife—He is giving you the opportunity to minister to that individual, live in the fear of God and in obedience, and demonstrate the Word of God in such a way that the unsaved individual will see it.

The Power of Godly Influence and the Virtuous Woman

Christian wives are not helpless and powerless. Christian husbands are not helpless and powerless. Christian women are not helpless and powerless, because there is power and influence. Therefore, we have to live before our mates and spouses a holy and godly life. When an unsaved wife sees that her saved husband loves her sincerely, singularly, and sacrificially, even as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, sooner or later there will be an influence on that woman. Likewise, if a man sees a godly woman living in obedience and faithfulness, there will shortly be an influence upon him. God is telling us that this is the way we are to live.

I believe this message is important because I personally know women who profess to be Christians and who divorce their husbands simply because their husbands were unsaved, although they were good husbands. In one sense I understand it; in another sense, I do not. But here is the truth.

The army has the slogan, "Be all you can be." I think that should be the slogan for every child of God. We ought to be all that we can be by the grace of God. We ought to do all that we can do in the love of God, and we ought to do all that we do for the honor and glory of God. That includes living a holy, godly life before an unsaved spouse.

Secondly, husbands and wives do indeed have influence and power over each other. I would encourage you, when you get home, to read the first five verses of 1 Corinthians 7. There you can see that power and influence, which must be used for that which is good, godly, and holy.

Now, I want you to turn to one last passage: Proverbs chapter 31. I think you probably realize I would reach this passage sooner or later. Look, first of all, at verses 10 and 12. Here is the picture God gives us of a godly woman and a godly wife. He asks this question: “Who can find a virtuous woman?”

“For her price is far above rubies.” Notice that he said a virtuous woman. He did not say a beautiful woman, but a virtuous woman. “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.” Now go back to verse 11: “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.” In other words, he

A husband does not have to do anything wicked or wrong, defraud someone, or steal to keep up a wife's lavish lifestyle because she spends all the money that he has. Alice will remember this. Years ago, I knew a college professor who was an older man with a younger wife. I remember seeing her walk down the street in high heels, dressed to the absolute nth degree, with a little fur coat around her, a little doggie on a leash with a little diamond collar. That poor man, I know, was always begging for money. He could not keep her up. This is what the Bible is saying: this virtuous woman will do him good. There will be no need for him to spoil or do anything wicked or wrong. She is going to live within her means.

“Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.” Then, “Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” “Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

In other words, what counts in men and women, husbands and wives, is character, integrity, and submission. Just as the wife is to be in submission to the husband, the husband is to be in submission to Jesus Christ. Both the man and the woman's price will then be far above rubies. God demands that we live in such a way that others may see the truth in us. They may not hear the preaching of the Word of God, but they cannot help but see the preaching of the Word of God in our lives.

Conclusion and Call to Biblical Living

We do have power and influence; we just need to use it biblically and scripturally. I cannot tell you how many times I have counseled individuals and seen the failure of both parts, the man and the woman. But God gives us character and integrity, and that is where we need to stand, doing that which is right and biblical and holy. No Jezebels, just virtuous women and godly husbands.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for your help and blessings. We ask, Lord, that you would teach us and help us to help others. Help us to understand these principles and use them in our lives, not only for ourselves, but to help others. Give us your grace and your mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 32

Let

July 27, 2025

Introduction: The Imperative 'Let'

In Colossians chapter 3, verses 15 through 25, we read:

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto

men, knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respecter of persons."

Let me begin by asking a few questions to set you up. Have you ever let something happen? Have you ever let your children play outside? Have you ever let your hair down? That phrase means that you simply relaxed and was actually yourself. We use this word "let" all the time. Usually it refers to permission or an allowance: "I will let you play my piano."

"I will let you drive my car. I will let you shoot my Glock." In other words, it is simply used as a term of permission. However, what we fail to note is that the word "let" can also be an imperative; that is, it is a command. I could shout, "Let that dog alone." That is not asking permission or giving allowance. That is giving a command. I could say, "Let me alone" or "Let us alone"—once again, that is a command. So many times we do not distinguish between how this little word is used.

When you go back and read in the book of Genesis, especially Genesis chapter 1, when God created the world, notice these verses. In Genesis 1:3, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." The word "let" in each of these verses I am going to quote happens to be a command. In Genesis 1:6, "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the water from the water."

"Let there be a firmament." Then Genesis 1:9 says, "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together, let dry land appear: and it was so." In Genesis 1:11, he said, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so."

Now look in your Bibles—hold in Colossians chapter 3—but look, if you would, to Psalm 33, because here is a very clear statement regarding the creation. Beginning with verse 8: "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him."

So you need to ask yourself this question: Why? "Let"—I am sure that would be a command there—"Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him." Why should all the earth fear the Lord? And why should all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him? Here is why, in verse 9: "For He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." So when God said, "Let there be light," "Let there be water," and "Let there be dry land," it was in essence a command. And it was done as God obeyed—now, that is, the waters and everything obeyed God.

Look in your Bibles at Colossians chapter 3, because I am going to show you how the word “let” is used. You remember how God sent Moses to Pharaoh? What did God say through Moses to Pharaoh? He said, “Let my people go.” That was not a suggestion or good advice. It was a command. Pharaoh, of course, paid the price for rejecting the sovereign authority and power of God.

Here is the reason for making this distinction. When you look in Colossians 3:15, where he said, “And let,” it is an imperative in the Greek, which means it is a command. Once again, in verse 16, “Let the word of Christ” is indeed a command as well. These two truths—actually, three truths that I am fixing together for you—are not mere suggestions or good advice. They are straight commands from God.

Now note where Paul began making commands. Looking back at verse 8, he said, “But now you also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.” The words “put off” constitute an imperative. It is a command. God is commanding us to put these things out of our lives.

Put Off and Put On (Colossians 3:8-14)

Look at verse 10: “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” The words “put on” are indeed an imperative as well. So “put off” and “put on” are commands from God. We are commanded to put certain things away from our lives—in other words, all our old habits and old ways of doing things that are carnal, fleshly, worldly, and wicked.

God says those things are to be put off. Then He tells us to put on the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness. Interestingly, in verse 8, he says, “But now you also put off.” The Greek word for “put off” is *apotithēmi*.

Now, *tithēmi* is usually a word that means to cause to stand. Often times it means to cause a stand in the mind. But when you put the preposition *apo* in front, that means away. In other words, it literally means put it away. Don't think about this. Put this thing off. Do not allow it to be in you. In other words, it is to be put off, it's to be taken away, or we would say it is to slide away.

When you look at verse 10, "And have put on the new man," the word "put on" is the word *enduo* and it literally means to sink into clothing. It means to put clothes on oneself. So we've all used this phrase at one time or the other: "Let me slip into something more comfortable." If I've got boots on, I'd like to slip into some bedroom shoes. If I've got a heavy coat on, I'd like to get it off and slip into something far more comfortable.

Now, this is exactly what this word "put on" means. It means basically that once we put off all of these old habits and old ways and old thoughts and all thought patterns, we're to put on something that is far more comfortable. If you look in verse 8 again, he says "put off." Then in verse 10, he says, "put on." Note what he's telling us: "But now you also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, that is put away lying, seeing that you've put off the old man"—there's another command—"with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God"—that's a command—"holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

"Above all these things put on charity" or love, "which is the bond of perfectness." He tells us what things are to be put off

specifically and what things are to be put on specifically. Remember what our Lord said in Matthew chapter 11, verses 29 and 30: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." Then He says, "And you shall find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

He is telling us to slip out of the old way of doing things and into something far more comfortable. In other words, living holy, obedient, godly lives is far more comfortable than living a disobedient, ungodly life and suffering the judgment of God. Literally, "put off" and "put on" is what He is saying.

You may say, "There are oftentimes afflictions and sufferings in the Christian life," and that is true. However, we ought to remember this: any affliction and suffering we have is for our good and for God's glory. Romans 8:28 is still true: "For we know that all things work together for good to them that are called according to His purpose." God works everything out for our good and for His glory.

It is better and easier to suffer afflictions in righteousness than to suffer for our sins, wickedness, and disobedience, if suffering is going to be a part of our lives.

I want you to see the connection from verse 8 right on down. He says, “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”

The Conjunction 'And' Connects the Commands

Now look in verse 15. The very first word is “and.” Verse 14, the very first word is “and.” The word “and” happens to be a conjunction. It binds thoughts together. It also implies that Paul was not finished in verse 13. Thus, in verse 14 and verse 15, he uses the word “and” again. This little word “and” is very important.

Suppose I am uptown and in a hurry, trying to get things done. Alice calls me and says, “While you’re uptown, will you bring me a gallon of milk?” I say, “Yes.” Then she says, “And…” What does that tell me? First, something else is coming. Second, she was not finished with the gallon of milk. She says, “Will you bring me a gallon of milk and a bag of potatoes?”

This is exactly what is happening here. The apostle is saying, “Put off” and “put on.” Then, in verse 14, he uses the conjunction “and,” and in verse 15, he uses the conjunction “and” again. He is tying all these thoughts together for us.

The first of three truths accompanying verses 8 through 14, particularly verse 15, is this: “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Verse 15 says, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.” Remember what was said earlier: the word “let” is a command; it is an imperative. There is a distinction between peace with God and the peace of God. It is impossible for anyone to have the peace of God unless he has already made peace with God. Romans 5:1 says, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God.”

First Command: Let the Peace of God Rule (v.15)

Peace with God means that you have thrown down your weapons of warfare, ceased your rebellion, ceased your fighting against Him, surrendered to Him, submitted to Him, and come to Him on His terms. So you may have peace with God. Once you have peace with God, now you may have the peace of God. So he says, “Let the peace of God rule in your heart.”

The word for peace is the Greek word *eirēnē*, and it literally refers not just to a state of tranquility. It does not simply refer to a

cessation of warfare, but it also refers to what you and I would call concord. That is, we are now in agreement and getting along. It refers to quietness, composure, and, as I will show you a little bit later, submission. The peace of God is a settled assurance in your mind based upon the Word of God, and nothing else is going to shake that. It is a settled assurance. This settled assurance in your mind, based upon the Word of God, does not necessarily cancel out what you and I would sometimes call natural concern, natural anxiety, or natural fear. However, the peace of God is indeed a settled assurance.

Years ago, I had my first surgery as an adult. I had surgery when I was two, but I knew nothing of it. I have no idea; I do not remember one thing. But as an adult, I had never been through surgery or been put to sleep. While I was there waiting, the anesthesiologist came in and explained to me what he was going to do and how he was going to put me to sleep.

As he was saying that, I was smiling. When he finished telling me, I was still smiling. He looked at me and said, "What? You don't think I can put you to sleep?" I looked at him and said, "Sir, I have no doubt in my mind that you can put me to sleep. That is not my concern. My concern is, can you wake me up?" Well, just stop and think about this.

I knew—beyond a shadow of a doubt—that God was going to bring me through that surgery. I knew that. But I had not been put to sleep before; I had never experienced that, and there is always a little natural anxiety. The peace of God is not necessarily going to cancel out all natural concern and anxiety. But it will assure you: yes, you are coming through this. You may not have experienced this before. It may not have happened to you before. But yes, you are going to come through it. Anything new, anything unexperienced, may cause concern, but it cannot and will not destroy the peace of God.

Look back at verse 15. He said, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." The command is to let the peace of God rule.

This little word "rule" is very important. It is a Greek word, *brabeuō*, and literally means this: Let the peace of God be an

umpire. Let it determine, decide, direct, control, and rule. Literally, let the peace of God be an umpire. Why in the world do you need an umpire in a ball game? What is his role? First of all, he calls the shots. It is the umpire who determines whether a ball is fair or foul. It is the umpire who declares what is correct and incorrect, and whether a pitch is a strike or not. He determines whether or not a runner is safe or out. Does it do you any good to argue with the umpire? No, because he has the power to put you out of the game. In other words, the umpire basically calls the shots in every situation. That is the point: the peace of God is to determine, decide, direct, control, and rule.

"Let the peace of God rule in your heart." Let the peace of God be an umpire. When he speaks of the peace of God ruling in our heart, he is not referring to the physical organ. The Greek word is *kardia*, and we get many of our English words straight from the Greek—cardiac comes straight from *kardia*. It refers to the heart; the heart, then, basically is the mind.

The heart is the soul, the fountain of life, and the seat of all thoughts and passions, desires, affections, emotions, purposes, endeavors, and understanding. It is the faculty and seat of intelligence. So he says, "Let the peace of God rule in your heart," or in your mind.

The interesting thing is this: the word "rule" happens to be a present active imperative. Imperative is a command. Present means something being done continually, constantly, consistently, and it is active. "Let the peace of God rule in your heart." The Holy Spirit is the one who brings peace. However, the peace of God is to rule in our minds. It is the peace of God that tells us, "Look, that thought is fleshly. That thought is wicked. That thought is ungodly. Put that out. You are not going to have peace as long as you are thinking on these things." It is the peace of God that tells us what is right.

Whatever you think about, think about what is virtuous, praiseworthy, honest, and of good report. He says in the book of Philippians, "Think on these things." So it is the peace of God that calls the shots in our minds. Look at verse 15 again: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which you are also called in

one body, and be thankful." When he says that you have been called in one body, it is not just the body of believers, but also the body of Christ. We are to be thankful—not just temporarily thankful, but eternally grateful and thankful. The phrase indicates that we should all, in one body, have the peace of God ruling in our hearts and minds.

Suppose that Steve and I had a falling out because we disagreed on something, and we had a serious disagreement. If the peace of God is ruling in our hearts, I am not going to sit here saying, "That old wicked Steve, he should repent." No, it is not wicked Steve who should repent; it is wicked John who should repent. He should be thinking, "I should repent." In other words, the peace of God is ruling and saying, "This is not right. You need to make things right. You need to repent. You need to forgive. You need to reconcile."

This is what he is talking about: let it rule in your hearts and mind. You have been called unto one body. Albert Barnes wrote: "The peace of God will thus calm down every agitated element of the soul, subdue the tumult of passion, and preserve the mind in healthful action and order, as a ruler sways and controls the passions of assembled multitudes of men."

We are not only to control our minds individually by the peace of God, but collectively as well. Look back at verse 15: "And let"—"let" as a command—"the peace of God rule"—"rule" as a command—"let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are also called in one body, and be ye thankful." Now look at verse 16. Here is the second thing: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Second Command: Let the Word of Christ Dwell Richly (v.16)

Again, this is an imperative; it is a command. You must see the connection between verses 15 and 16. In connection with what was to be put off and put on in verses 8 through 14, he says, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Then he says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Let me put it very plainly: it is impossible for the peace of God to rule in your hearts unless the word of Christ dwells in you richly. It is the Word of Christ dwelling in us that gives us peace in our minds and hearts.

The word "dwell" is *enoikeō*. *Oikeō* is the verb, and *en* is the preposition. The noun is *oikos*. We could say *en oikos*, but *enoikeō* is the verb. *En* simply means "in," and *oikos* is the Greek word for "house." *Oikeō* literally means to dwell in the house. In verse 15 he says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Then in verse 16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Thus, when he says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you," he is saying, Let the word of Christ be in your house.

What is your house? It is your body. Your body houses your mind, your spirit, your soul, and your heart. Your body houses everything that you are. I can look at Grace and see her body, but Grace is actually residing in that body.

Hold Colossians 3, and turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. I want you to see how the Apostle Paul uses the word "house" to refer to our bodies—not only our physical bodies, but also our spiritual bodies. He says in verse 1: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle"—that is, our body—"were dissolved," that is, if we die, "we have a building of God, a house that is a heavenly body, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Then he says in verse 2: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house"—our body, our heavenly body, our eternal body—"which is from heaven."

Your body is your house. Everyone now and then speaks about the economy. May I tell you what the word "economy" is? Our English word "economy" is made up of two Greek words: *oikos nomos*. *Oikos* is house, and *nomos* is law. Our word "economy" means the law of the house. Everybody has a law of the house. You know where you put your money and where you should not put your money. Just as every house is to have an economy, so is every state and every nation. That economy is simply the law of the house.

Here is the interesting thing: the Word of God is to dwell in us richly. *Plousiōs* is the Greek word; it means to dwell in us abundantly. It dwells in us richly, and this wealth in our bodies, minds, and hearts is exceedingly beneficial. Let me show you what God says about His Word. Hold Colossians 3, but turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 4. Begin reading with verse 5. Moses says, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it." He said, "I have taught you what God commanded me to teach you." Now look at what he says about those commandments, about that law.

“Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?”

He says, “Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom, this is your understanding.” Then he asks, “What nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them?” How is God brought nigh unto us? Through His word, through His law. He also asks, “What nation is so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous?” In other words, this is what it means when he says in Colossians chapter 3, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” You have to understand that the word of Christ is our wisdom. It is our understanding.

Go back to Colossians chapter 3 and look at verse 16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” The next time you read through the book of Psalms, look at the headings. They will say something like “A Psalm of David,” “A hymn of Asaph,” or “A song of Asaph.” David did not write all the Psalms. Asaph wrote Psalms, and Moses wrote Psalm 90. The book of Psalms is divided into psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. When verse 16 says, “Let

the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord," it is saying that we teach one another and sing the Word of God.

You can teach doctrine with music. You can teach false doctrine with music, and you can teach biblical doctrine with music. Notice how, when there is a catchy tune, children pick up on it. Years ago, Alice and I were at, believe it or not, the Mule Days Festival, where they did everything with mules. They ground cane and did everything with mules. As we walked among the exhibits, a couple came pushing a little buggy with a little boy in it, and he was singing, "Outback Steakhouse." He could not pronounce it, but the tune was catchy.

When Alice's baby sister was young, she was caught out on the street singing, "When you're out of Schlitz, you're out of beer." Alice had to run in and tell her mother that Peggy was out there singing about beer. Peggy was only four or five years old. She did not understand what she was singing; it was simply a catchy tune.

When we sing psalms, however, we are singing Scripture. There are beautiful psalters; in fact, we use a psalter. We also have a book called Psalms for Singing, with psalms set to hymns we already know. I could never use a Scottish psalter because I cannot do that, but when you can sing a psalm to "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art," or something similar, you are singing Scripture.

When the Word of God dwells in us richly, we are not only going to be singing to ourselves; we are going to be teaching others in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. When the Word of God dwells in us richly, it is easy for the peace of God to rule our hearts. The Bible says in Psalm 119:165, "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Nothing is going to upset us or cause us to stumble. Great peace have they which love thy law. When the word of Christ dwells in us richly, it is very easy for the peace of God to rule our hearts and minds.

Third Command: Do All to the Glory of God (v.17)

Look in your Bibles to the book of Colossians, chapter 3 and verse 17: "And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." I realize the word "let" is not in this verse. But notice the word "and" at the very beginning of verse 17. It is a conjunction, joining verse 17 with verse 15 and verse 16, as well as verse 14. If the peace of God is ruling in your mind and the Word of Christ is dwelling in you richly, then, thirdly, you are going to have the glory of God controlling your words and deeds. "Whatsoever you do in word or deed"—that would be everything—"do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

Probably everyone can answer this catechetical question: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Whatever you do in word or deed, whether you are speaking or acting, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

Here is the interesting thing: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God." In other words, if the peace of God is ruling in our minds, and if the word of Christ is dwelling in us richly, then the controlling aim and purpose of our life will be to bring honor and glory to God. He is giving us a universal direction for every capacity of our being, both personal and relative, in every motion. A Christian should be doing that which is pleasing and acceptable unto God. How do we do that which is pleasing and acceptable unto God? Whatever we do in word or deed, we do all to His honor and glory.

Ephesians 5:20 says, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice this: "giving thanks always"—"for all things." How many of you ever thank God that you had the flu? How many have ever thanked God that you had to go to the hospital for surgery? Those are things we do not normally thank God for. But you could thank God even if you have the flu, that at least you are not dead. You can thank God if you have to have surgery, that it is no worse than what it really is. In everything, give thanks unto God.

Hebrews 13:15 says, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." We as priests are to be offering the sacrifice of praise continually, and that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. Note the first two words: "by Him," or "through Him," or "in Him." Nothing is left out for which we should give our Lord thanks and praise.

Everything in word or deed is to be done for His honor and glory. Everything is to be done in faith. First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Whether you eat, whether you drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. That is to be our main end and our main purpose. Whatever we do in word or deed, we are to do all to the glory of God.

John Gill says it like this: "Whether in preaching the Word of Christ, in hearing the gospel, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in conference and conversation with each other, or in whatsoever action, civil or religious, throughout the whole life and conversation, in the performance of things natural, moral, and evangelical, relating to God or man, or to one another, in the world or the church." Everything.

Everything begins and ends with God. Everything should begin and end with God. Calvin said, “For we shall fitly comprehend under this term the two following things. Number one, that all our aims may set out with the invocation of Christ and may be subservient to His glory. From invocation follows the act of blessing God, which supplies us with a matter of thanksgiving. It is also to be observed that He teaches that we must give thanks to the Father through Christ, as we obtain through Him”—that is, through Christ—“every good thing that God bestows upon us.”

Everything that God the Father bestows upon us is in and through and because of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1 in verse 3 says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.” Everything is in Christ. Everything is through Christ. Everything is by Christ. So we are to give thanks to the Father by Him.

Application to Relationships (vv.18-25)

Everything begins and ends with God in this sense: If the peace of God is ruling in your heart, it is because the word of Christ is dwelling in you richly. If the word of Christ is dwelling in you richly, it is because you have a set purpose and aim to honor and glorify God. These three things are important: Let the peace of God rule. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let the honor and glory of God be your aim and purpose.

The Apostle Paul, like an excellent physician, makes not only a diagnosis but tells us the remedy for the diagnosis or the problem. "Let the peace of God be an umpire in your heart." If there is no peace in your heart or mind, it cannot be an umpire. The peace of God has to be there, and it comes through the word of Christ dwelling in you richly. The word of Christ comes through honoring Him and setting God's honor and glory above all things in your life. These three things will cure all problems—or at least most of them, 99% of them—if we do them. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom."

Verse 17: "And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Those three things.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." What does that mean? It means a wife that has the peace of God ruling in her life, and the Word of God dwelling in her richly, and who wants to honor and glorify God, will submit to her husband.

"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." What does that mean? If a husband has the peace of God ruling in his heart, the word of Christ dwelling in him richly, and has set the honor and glory of God as his main end and purpose, he is going to love his wife as Christ loved the church, and he is not going to be bitter against her. That is going to take care of your family problems.

"Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." If our children had the peace of God ruling in their hearts, the word of God dwelling in them richly, and

the aim and honor and glory of God as their purpose, then they would do that which is well-pleasing unto the Lord. They would obey their parents in all things. There are most of your family problems taken care of right there.

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Once again, if the peace of God is ruling in the father's heart, if the word of Christ is dwelling in him richly, and he wants to honor and glorify God, he is not going to do things that provoke or discourage his children.

Now let us consider an equitable situation. What does Scripture say? "Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God." "And whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men."

Someone recently said that all slavery is wrong. That is not true. There is a biblical doctrine of slavery and an unbiblical doctrine of slavery. Biblical slavery was usually temporary, not more than six years; on the seventh year, the man had to be set free. It was intended to teach responsibility, accountability, and the ability to work and take care of oneself. This was not kidnapping. In the Bible, a man could sell himself into slavery, or he could be captured in war and become a slave. If I were captured in war and became a slave, I would much prefer that to having my head cut off.

There's a biblical slavery and non-biblical slavery. Here he says, "Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. Not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord." There were Christian slaves. The great hymn "Amazing Grace" was written by John Newton, who was a slave trader, and God saved him.

Look at verses 24 and 25: "Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ." If these three things are in your life—the peace of God ruling in your hearts, the word of Christ dwelling in you richly, and your aim and purpose being the honor and glory of God—you know that you shall receive the reward of the inheritance. Why? "For you

serve the Lord Christ." That is how we serve Him. "But he that doeth wrong"—that is, he that does not have these things in his life—"he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respecter of persons."

Notice how these things affect our lives. If the peace of God is ruling in our hearts, the Word of Christ is dwelling in us richly, and the honor and glory of God is our main purpose and end, it is going to resolve family problems, domestic problems, business problems, equity problems, and other problems as well. We are indeed to know that we serve the Lord Christ.

Conclusion: The Necessity of Submission

He also said in the latter part of verse 17, "giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." We are always to give thanks to Him, continue in prayer, and always watch with thanksgiving.

Let me make a couple of applications before we close. The first is a quote from Adam Clarke, specifically concerning verse 15 in Colossians 3: "No heart is right with God where the peace of God does not rule. And the continual prevalence of the peace of Christ is the decisive proof that the heart is right with God. When a man loses his peace, it is an awful proof that he's lost something else, that he's given away to evil and grieved the Spirit of God. When peace rules, all is safe."

Remember Psalm 51, where David confesses his sin against God and prays, "Restore to me the joy of thy salvation." It is not only peace that you lose in sinning, but also the joy of salvation. When you lose the peace of God, you have heard, because it is to rule our hearts and minds, when you decide that you yourself are going to be the umpire, you are in bad, bad trouble.

Please remember that it is impossible for the peace of God to rule without the word of Christ dwelling in you richly. If the word of Christ is not dwelling in you richly, you will not have the honor and glory of God as your aim and purpose.

These truths go far beyond our physical family and reach our spiritual family. We have been called into one body, and that body is of Christ. Therefore, we must desire harmony, quietness,

comfort, and unity. If these principles are in our lives, there is no problem with getting along and loving each other.

I have found, unhappily, that many times it is not just Christians; sometimes it is preachers who cannot be satisfied unless there is a fight brewing or someone stirring up trouble. I have known people who could not be happy unless they were fussing and fighting.

That boggles my mind, because God has called us to peace, obedience, and submission. None of these things can be in your mind, life, or heart unless you have a submissive attitude. If you do not submit to God, there will not be the peace of God ruling in your heart. If you do not submit to Him, the Word of Christ will not be dwelling in you richly, and His honor and glory will not be your aim or purpose. Your aim and purpose will be the fulfillment of your flesh, your lust, your desires, what you see, what you want, your will, and your way.

These are commanded, not a suggestion. If we are a child of God, the peace of God is to rule, the word of Christ is to dwell in us richly, and our aim and purpose should be the honor and glory of God.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace particularly. Lord, we confess and acknowledge that we need these things in our lives. You have commanded them, Lord. Enable us to be submissive; enable us, Lord, to honor Thee and glorify Thee, and to possess these characteristics. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 33

Rural Home Defense Conference

September 15, 2025

Introduction and Foundation

Now let me mention, I'm just going to tell you, actually the theme of this little conference came from this book. I'm not going to be teaching or preaching what's in this book. This is Rural Home Self-Defense or Rural Home Defense. And this is written by Don Schiff, who is a retired cop. He also has another book on a rural, not rural, but suburban home defense. And so these books are good. And what we've done over on this little couch over here, we've got a lot of books just for you to look at. There's some on that book on the table right there. None of them are for sale, but just to show you what is available. And once I teach today, you'll understand, I think, the necessity of some of these books and the value of them as well.

So let's have prayer to begin with and we'll just get started. Okay? Let's pray. Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we come to thee this day. We thank you for your word. We thank you

for your truth. And Lord, we pray that you would teach us and build us up in the most holy faith. May your perfect and holy will be accomplished today. Give us, Lord, our understanding hearts, and may we serve thee in reverence and godly fear. In thy name we pray. Amen.

Alright, let's open our Bibles, if you would please, to 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 8. I preached this message to our people back in November. I actually started preparing for this meeting back in November, and when I finished this message, I thought it was so important I did not want to wait to preach it. So I preached to our people. So some of our people have heard this message, and probably most of them have forgotten it—I hope not—but I'm just simply saying I think this is foundational. It is a root message, and that I'm going to start from here. The other messages nobody's ever heard. So I'm just going to tell you here, 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 8. The title of the message is "Responsibility and Responding." So if you look in verse 8, 1 Timothy 5:8, the Bible says, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

The Myth of Government Protection

Who is responsible to protect your life, your family, and your property? Many take the position that it is the responsibility of the government to protect them, and therefore they do absolutely nothing to prepare themselves or their family. One recent survey discovered that a whopping 71.2% of all Americans have no faith in the United States government to save them or prevent a doomsday event. If you actually believe that the government will be there to rescue you when things really start hitting the fan, you're being delusional. If the emergency supplies the government has on hand were equally divided among the entire population—330 million Americans, not counting the 30 million illegal immigrants—they would not last a single day.

So many people think that somehow the government's going to come in and save them. A few tend to believe that the police or the deputies or the sheriff somehow will protect them and their

property. Then you have to remember this: when you really need them, they're at least 30 minutes away. And usually, law enforcement arrives just in time to secure the crime scene. In other words, it's over by that time. You're a victim and you're dead. Your property is stolen and your family probably has been murdered as well.

Here's a quote it would pay you to remember, from Darren L. Hutchinson, professor and associate dean at the University of Florida School of Law: "Neither the Constitution nor state law imposes a general duty upon police officers or other governmental officials to protect individual persons from harm, even when they know harm will occur. Police can watch someone attack you, refuse to intervene, and not violate the Constitution. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the government has only a duty to protect persons who are in custody." So if you want to be protected by the cops, you need to get arrested. Otherwise, they have absolutely no duty to protect you at all.

So here's a biblical truth that I'm going to annunciate from the Bible: you are responsible for your life. You're responsible for your family. You're responsible for your property. You are the first responder, not the cops, not the firemen. You are the first responder, and it's not up to your neighbors.

You Are the First Responder

It is up to you. You are responsible. If you do not learn to protect yourself and have the means to protect yourself, then you are going to be a victim. One man said it like this: When you don't think of yourself as the first responder, your destiny is to be the first victim. That is certainly true. Here is a recent headline: Terrorist activity within the continental United States and general violent crimes are increasing exponentially and are likely to get much worse. The situation is so discouraging that our leftist media is desperately and deliberately under-reporting all violent crime because it makes the Democrat darlings look bad.

Exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:8

At the border, a number of illegal immigrants coming across have been caught with IEDs, improvised explosive devices. So I am simply telling you, it is up to you to learn to be responsible. Now, if you look in your Bibles at 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 8, the Bible says, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Before I show you this message and this truth from 1 Timothy 5 and verse 8, I want to show you the remote context, and then we will look at the immediate context in which verse 8 occurs. The remote context is 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15, which is the theme of the book: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Everything in 1 Timothy, and actually 2 Timothy, is based upon the fact that this is how we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God, especially when you get to 1 Timothy 2. But the point I am trying to make is, when we are talking about families, if you are a believer, you actually have two families: the family of faith and your own personal, physical family. So I think the widest application of what I am going to say today would be to our church, to our fellow believers in Jesus Christ, and secondly, then to our immediate family.

Turn back to 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 3. The Bible says, "Honor widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." Now look at verse 7: "And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Interestingly, verse 7 says, "these things give in charge." What does "charge" mean? The Greek word is paraggelia, translated in our Bibles as "charge," "command," and "commandment." Look back at 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 3, to see how it is used. Paul tells Timothy, "As I besought thee to abide still

at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Paul said, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

Now, the word "charge" here does not mean a suggestion. It does not mean to give advice. The word "charge" is actually the word "command." For instance, skip down, if you would, in verse 5 and look at this. Because now he says, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Now he says, "the end of the commandment." What commandment? What commandment is he talking about? Well, if you go back to verse 3, and he said, "I give thee charge." It's the same word, paraggelia. Now it's translated as "commandment" in verse 5. So a charge then is indeed a commandment. Now Paul then tells Timothy, if you will look back to 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 7, "these things give in charge." When he says that, he's not talking about giving suggestions. He's not talking about giving advice. He's saying you give them a commandment. Why? Are we to be given this commandment? And the answer is found in verse 7, "that we may be blameless."

Now the word "blameless" there happens to be a word that refers to being blameless, to being unrebukable, to be without censure, without being condemned. In fact, the Bible tells you in Philippians chapter 2 and verse 15, listen to this, "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." So he's saying once again that we should be without rebuke.

So Paul is giving this commandment that you and I are to provide for our own, especially their own household. And he says this is a commandment and I'm giving it to you that you may be blameless.

Now, so look, if you would, in verse 8 again. Verse 8. And Carl, if you don't mind, please, since you're long and tall, come close this vent. It's blowing right on me. All right. Look, if you would, at verse 8. Look what he said: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Notice, if you would, he denied the faith and he's worse than an infidel.

Now, do you see a picture? I want you to think about this. Usually the husband and the father, of course, is the head of the house. That is the way the Word of God has ordained it.

Now, he says in verse 4, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God." So notice he talked about children and nephews. Suppose Alice and I both get down, unable to work or do anything. Who's responsible to take care of us? Our children. That's a fact. What if we don't have any children? Then he mentions nephews. In other words, it's the immediate family, and then the extended family. Look again at verse 4: "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home." What is piety? It's godliness, holiness. How are children and nephews supposed to show piety at home? The Bible says, "...and requite their parents." The word "requite" means to pay back. We took care of our children when they could not take care of themselves—fed them, clothed them, educated them. Now God says when parents get elderly and can't take care of themselves, it's the children's turn to pay them back. It's not the government's responsibility to take care of your elderly; it's your responsibility. Alice and I took care of her mother until she died, and my mother until she died. Our fathers both died early. Alice's mother lived with us for 17 years; in the last three years, she lived in the house with us because she could not live alone. So the Bible says we are to take care of those, to pay back. Now, consider once again that the husband and father is the head of the house, and God has designated him as the provider.

Look back at verse 8: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I'm going to say this now, and I'm going

to say it again later. Do you realize the only thing that you have to do to deny the faith and be worse than an infidel is to deny and not fulfill your responsibility? That's it. If you do not fulfill your responsibility, the Bible says you have denied the faith and that you are worse than an infidel.

Now, when you and I think about provision, the very first thing we think about is food and clothing. Stop and think about that. You've got hungry children. You've got children that need all kinds of clothes and that kind of thing. Wow, that's exactly what we think about. But let me tell you something about the word provision. Just because you and I think about food and clothing does not mean that is exactly what that word means. The word provision in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 8 is a Greek word. It's called pronoeo. Pro happens to be a preposition which means before. Noeo means to think and to consider. It's from the Greek word nous, which is the mind. So actually the word prepare here or provide means that you are actually thinking beforehand, you are understanding beforehand, you are perceiving beforehand, you're considering beforehand. In other words, it does not just simply deal with food and clothing. It deals also with every provision imaginable. So the word provide then means to perceive with the mind, to understand with the mind. It means to heed and to ponder and consider.

So here's the question that I'm going to ask you. Since you understand how broad this word is, provide does not just refer to food and clothing. So here's the question. Have you provided for the defense of your family? Have you provided for the protection of your family? Have you provided for the medical care of your family? I'm just simply pointing out the fact we need to understand that the word provide means far more than what you and I would just simply consider food and clothing.

Now I want you to look in verse 8 again. Look at 1 Timothy chapter 5 verse 8. He said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." So if you do not provide then for the lives and the safety and protection of your family, God says that you're worse than an infidel and

Biblical Basis for Armed Defense

Now, I'm going to give you a couple of quotes. The first is from Harry Brown: "The police can't stop an intruder, mugger, or stalker from hurting you. They can pursue him only after he has hurt or killed you. Protecting yourself from harm is your responsibility, and you are far less likely to be hurt in a neighborhood of gun owners than in one of disarmed citizens, even if you don't own a gun yourself." That is true. There's another quote I want to give you. There was a man by the name of Jack Potter, known as Fighting Jack Potter. He happened to be a Confederate soldier, but he was also a Methodist circuit riding preacher after the war was over. Here's what Jack Potter said, a pastor: "I'm not so anxious to wear a martyr's crown as to sacrifice my life when God requires me to use means to preserve it. It is no evidence of a preacher's want of trust in God when he carries a gun to shield his life in the time of peril. It would be the most sinful presumption not to do so. Indeed, I do not carry a gun because I'm afraid to die, but because it is a duty and a means to preserve life." Wow. Now, God places a very high value on the family, and He places a very high value on family protection. I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Luke, chapter 11, and notice verse 21. Our Lord says, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." First of all, note He talks about a strong man—someone strong not just in body but also in mind. Secondly, the Bible says he is a strong armed man. The word "armed" in the Greek, kathoplizō, literally means furnished with arms. In other words, he has more than one. Third, the Bible says he keeps or guards and protects himself and his goods. But note, in order to do so, he has to be a strong man and he has to be an armed man, one furnished with arms.

Now, here's another reason why you should understand family protection and self-protection. God not only requires it, but He's telling you if you're going to provide for the safety of your family, you better be thinking ahead. Why? Just because you're armed, just because you're furnished with arms, does not mean that that is sufficient in and of itself. Look at verse 22: "But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him his armor wherein he trusted and divided the spoils." It is wise

to consider that I have need to protect my family, that I must be furnished with arms, and have an ample supply to do what God requires. But I also must consider this: What if a stronger man comes along with more arms? Or what if a stronger individual or a stronger group comes along? I have to consider that as well.

The last meeting we had was on community, where believers would actually come together. Do you understand this is exactly what our Lord is hinting at right here? Because if you are alone, no matter what you have, you cannot defend yourself or your family or your property. It's impossible. No one can stay awake 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No one can do everything that needs to be done. It's absolutely impossible.

This is how the early settlers and the frontiersmen protected themselves. If they were alone, they were easy targets. So they would come into communities, into groups, and sometimes they would even build a little fort. But they always had someone that would come to their aid when aid was needed. You know, one of our problems is this. You and I have lived in relative safety for so long, we don't think anything like this can happen to us. It's cognitive dissonance. It happens somewhere else, but it's never going to happen here. It's going to happen to other people, but it's never ever going to happen to us. That's how we think.

Current Threats and the Need for Preparation

I have a friend, Michael Danley, a police officer nearing retirement. He called me this past week and said, "I want you to convey this to your people." He said, "I carry everywhere I go, even when I'm off duty, and so does my family." I've helped train him and his family. He said, "We went to a little out-of-the-way Chinese restaurant out in the boonies, so I left my weapon in the car." Michael is a big man—not fat, not flabby, just big—and his boys are big, like six-four, six-five, strong as ox. Michael told me, "I went in the bathroom to wash my hands before we ate. Just as I was washing my hands, someone was banging on the door loudly cursing: 'Get out of there! Get out of there!' It was a big black man. One of my boys hollered, 'Dad, watch out! He's got a gun!' There I was in the bathroom without my weapon. When I locked the door, the man

ran in cussing me. I went around to the manager or owner and asked, 'What's wrong with him?' The man said, 'He just hates white people.' He then came out of the bathroom and began to antagonize and curse me. So I looked at the owner and said, 'Well, we're just gonna leave.' He followed us outside. My children and wife went ahead and got in the car. I had a choice: whether I should reach in and try to grab my weapon or just jump in the car and leave. But he already had his weapon out. That would have been foolish for me. So the children opened the door for me. I jumped in and drove off. I called the local law enforcement and swore out a warrant for his arrest."

You see what I mean. Here's a man who's been a cop all of his life, and he said, "I just never dreamed something like this would happen in that one little out-of-the-way restaurant." This is what I'm talking about. Let me give you a recent headline from the Highland County Press out of Ohio, just this past year, a few months back: A real threat.

Experts warn Hamas-connected terrorists crossing U.S. border. Here are the first three short paragraphs of that article. "Hundreds of immigrants on the federal terror watch list have been caught at the southern and northern U.S. borders in recent years, and national security experts say there is a real threat of a terrorist attack on American soil as a result. With the conflict between Israel and Gaza-based terrorist group Hamas escalating, that threat has only grown. U.S. Customs and Border Protection's San Diego field office warns that Hamas may attempt to send individuals to the United States through the southern border."

Well, the truth of the matter is they're already here, and so are 30,000 Chinese communist soldiers. Where in the world do you think all of these people are coming across the border? They're single military-age men. They're not coming with wives and children. I'm just simply pointing out, here is Ohio even talking about this. In other words, these terrorist cells have already been pre-positioned. Why? Years ago they were talking about the Islamic training camps over around Jessup, Georgia and around other places as well. They're all over the country. So, here's the question. What in the world are you going to do when one of these

groups approaches your family, your property, your home? What is going to transpire? Are you going to have help? Are you going to be alone? Are you going to be outnumbered? Are you going to be outgunned? Have you provided?

Have you worked with your neighbors? Have you worked with your family? Have you asked others to help you? Scripture not only teaches that we need help, it teaches that two are more than one. For instance, if you look in your Bibles to the book of Ecclesiastes, the book of Ecclesiastes. Notice if you would chapter 4 of the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes arrives before the Song of Solomon. Look in Ecclesiastes chapter 4, beginning there with verse 9. Ecclesiastes 4:9, God says, "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." So God is saying, yeah, it's good to have two or three people around who's going to help you and to work with you.

Frédéric Bastiat, if you've never read his little book on the law, I would encourage you to do so. It's a very short book. He was a Frenchman, and it's a classic work. But here's what he said in one of his paragraphs: "If every person has a right to defend, even by force, his person, his liberty, and his property, then it follows that a group of men have the right to organize and support a common force to protect their rights constantly."

So here is a thought to consider involved with provision. If you cannot reach each other, if you cannot communicate with each other, you cannot help each other. So how in the world are you going to communicate if the power grid is down? How are you going to communicate if the electricity is turned off? How are you going to communicate if all the internet is down? That's why those little handheld radios, they can reach 5 miles and with an antenna 15 and 20 miles and sometimes more if you have a larger one there. In fact, we built out here in one of our classes, we built an antenna and then we hooked everything up and where was the man? In New York, was it New York? We talked to him over our

radio and he was in New York. So it's amazing what some of these little things can do when you have the right equipment. So I'm just simply pointing out the fact, have you thought about this? When that cell phone's not working, what in the world are you going to use?

This is why we need community and like-minded people. We have a family of faith and our physical family, and we must learn to take responsibility for our own lives, families, and property. During an EMP, an electromagnetic pulse attack, or a natural calamity—a tornado, hurricane, or flood—just stop and think. When those things happen, all the stores are usually looted. Look at Hurricane Katrina, the hurricanes in Texas, and the stadium where they housed everybody. When there is no food left and nothing to steal, the hordes will be looking. If they see a garden, they will assume you have food, canned food, or stored food, and they are coming to see you. You are next on their list. Just listen and look at what is happening in the mobs in larger cities. They go into jewelry stores, convenience stores, and expensive stores, thirty, forty, or fifty at a time, stealing everything and running out. No one stops them because no one will shoot them, and they devastate and destroy everything.

Colonel Jeff Cooper, now dead, said, "One cannot legislate the maniacs off the street. These maniacs can only be shut down by an armed citizenry. Indeed, bad things can happen in nations where the citizenry is armed, but not as bad as those which seem to be threatening our disarmed citizenry in this country at this time." He also said, "You can say 'stop,' or you can say 'alto,' or use any word you think will work. But I have found that a large bore muzzle pointed at someone's head is pretty much the universal language." That will make someone stop. Senator Larry Craig said, "The first right of every human being is the right of self-defense. Without that right, all other rights are meaningless. The right of self-defense is not something the government bestows upon its citizens. It is an inalienable right, older than the Constitution itself. It existed prior to government and prior to the social contract of our Constitution." Certainly, we have an inalienable right not only to defend ourselves, but also to stand together to defend ourselves and come together to preserve our lives. It is our God-given right.

The Sixth Commandment and the Duty to Preserve Life

I may speak on this this afternoon, but I want to mention it now. The sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," could read "Thou shalt not murder" or "Thou shalt not take life apart from God's directive." That is a negative; the positive is "Thou shalt preserve life." So the positive side of the sixth commandment is that you have a duty and responsibility to preserve your life, the life of your family, and the life of your neighbors as well. Psalm 82:3 says, "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy." You have to understand that in 1 Timothy 5:8, "But if any provide not for his own," the word "provide" means to think beforehand, to consider beforehand. It does not just deal with food or clothing; it means everything your family would need for protection. So you have to think beforehand and prepare your mind beforehand.

Practical Preparation and Trust in God

Here's another question: Have you seriously thought about and prepared for medical emergencies? Don't tell me, "I'm not a doctor, nurse, EMT, or paramedic." Neither am I. Most people are not. But I know how to suture. I've sewed up animals and humans. I know how to stop bleeding and pack a wound. I'm not a doctor. That's why I want you to look at some of these books over here. There are so many things you can learn. You can even go to your local tech school and learn CPR and basic medicine. Have you ever considered what will happen medically when there are no hospitals, no clinics, and no one around?

If an EMP happens, whether naturally or as an act of war, you're not going to have a hospital or electricity. You're going to have to take care of yourself. This is absolutely astounding to me: how in the world did people on the frontier take care of medical emergencies?

How did women ever have babies before there were hospitals? How did people set broken bones when no doctor was around? How did people deal with animal attacks? If you've never heard my message, "Mountain Man Jedediah Strong Smith," I would

encourage you to listen to it. Jedediah Smith was a Christian. On his second expedition, he was attacked by a grizzly bear. The bear came out of the thicket and mauled Smith violently, throwing him to the ground, smashing his ribs, and literally ripping off his scalp. When the attack was over, the scalp was hanging on his head by an ear. Smith instructed Jim Clyman to sew it back on. Remember, there was no lidocaine back then, nothing to deaden the pain. Clyman did the best he could, but thought nothing could be done for the severed ear. Smith insisted that he try. According to Clyman, "I put my needle, sticking it in through and through and over and over, laying the lacerated parts together as nice as I could with my hands." After two weeks of rest, Smith returned to his duty as captain of the party. If you think that is something, you ought to read about Hugh Glass. Hugh Glass was another mountain man, mauled so terribly by a grizzly bear that his friends thought he would die any time. The Indians were around, so they took his knife and weapon and left him to die. Hugh Glass came to, crawled to the river, washed his wounds, drank some water, and crawled on his hands and knees until he found carrion, a dead carcass, and ate some of that meat. When he got some strength, he began to walk and stumble, and he walked and stumbled for 200 miles until he came to Fort Kiowa, and he lived. I'm simply pointing out the fact: we need to learn to do some things for ourselves. You can buy medical books, herbal books, and medical supplies. You can teach yourself basic medicine and have supplies on hand for short-term and even long-term emergencies. By the way, back in November, I spoke for three hours at one conference on preparedness to survive.

Fish antibiotics and animal antibiotics are the same as our antibiotics; you just need to know the difference in weight and how to apply them. Two companies now let you stock up on antibiotics and whatever you need: Jase Medical, J-A-S-E, and The Wellness Company, which is Dr. Peter McCullough. You go online, fill out your form, they send it to a doctor, the doctor signs off on it, and then they send you the kit—all kinds of antibiotics, even ivermectin is in it. Both companies are very good. I'm simply saying you can.

So let me ask this question again. Whose responsibility is it to keep your family not just fed, not just clothed, but protected and

also prepared for medical emergencies? It's your responsibility. Turn in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians chapter 3. It is not your responsibility to feed the whole world or take care of the whole neighborhood. It is your responsibility to take care of your family, which would include your physical family and your church family as well. Beginning in verse 10, Paul said, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." Go back to verse 10: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." It is your job, your responsibility, to take care of your family and to provide for their every need. Yes, there is biblical charity, and I've got messages on that, but charity does not extend to supporting the indolent, the lazy, the sluggards who will not work and provide for themselves.

Hungry men will usually do one of two things: they'll either go to work or they'll steal. If someone is willing to work, you might be willing to share. But if someone wants to steal, then you have to deal with that problem. I understand charity. But if times get really, really tough, and you have just enough to take care of your family, and then I come along with my little children and ask you to share—are you going to take the bread out of your children's mouth and give it to my children? I'm simply pointing out the fact we have a responsibility to prepare.

Now, in all things, we have to learn to trust the Lord Jesus Christ. David said this over and over in the Psalms. Psalm 7, verse 10: "My defense is of God, who saveth the upright in heart." Psalm 31, verse 2: "Bow down thine ear unto me; deliver me speedily: for thou art my strong rock, and my house of defense to save me." And then he says, "Because of his strength"—that is the enemy's strength—"I will wait upon thee: for God is my defense."

While we prepare and while we may be willing and able to defend ourselves, that does not mean that we trust in our provisions or in our abilities. It means that we must trust in God

and God alone. We must be wise, as He commands us: "Be wise as serpents." "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise." I'll deal with some of those later, but the point right now is that it is your responsibility to take care of your family. It's not the government's job. It's not the job of your neighbor. It's your responsibility.

God said, "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he is worse than an infidel. He hath denied the faith." All you have to do to be worse than an infidel and deny the faith is to deny your responsibility. The old saying, you've heard it all of your life: "Trust in the Lord and keep your powder dry." Psalm 127, verse 1: "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." So all of our preparations, even though we're responsible to prepare, are worthless unless God sovereignly protects us.

God requires you to provide everything that your family needs. In just a moment, I'm going to have prayer; Lorne Luke will speak about ten minutes, then we'll take a short break before I start on a different subject. But please understand, I honestly think this message I just preached is absolutely fundamental, because we cannot deny our responsibility. So let's pray, then Lorne Luke will come up, and then we'll take a short break.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we love Thee today. We thank You for Your Word and truth, and we ask that You would make us see our responsibility, help us understand Thy truth and apply it to our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

Luke chapter 10, verses 38 through 42, a familiar passage of Jesus being received into the home of Mary and Martha. Verse 38: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he"—that is Christ—"and those that were with him entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me."

Verse 41: "And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her."

Notice Martha's question to our Lord in verse 40: "Lord, dost thou not care?" Jesus's response seems calm and collected, but do you realize what Martha just asked? "Lord, dost thou not care?" A wretched question. If we must know anything, we must know this: Christ does care. This is a wretched question. It ought to stir in us a response, a reaction. How dare she ask such a question? If we don't react appropriately, who are we? Do we not think that maybe Martha's right? Maybe Christ doesn't—we're waffling on it. We ought to know, as the old hymn says, "Oh yes, He cares; I know He cares." So our reaction to the question ought to be one of assurance and surety that Christ does care, simply in response to Martha's question.

Now, back to 1 Samuel chapter 17, the very famous story where David is given provisions from his father to take to his brothers in the field of battle, the story of Goliath. As we pick it up, look at verse 26, the last part, since we're all familiar with the story. David says to his brothers: "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Who is he? That's a good question. Verse 28, and Eliab, David's eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men. Notice the last part of that verse. Eliab says, "David, I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." See some of the gore, see some of the excitement. Eliab is wrongfully accusing him of it. Verse 29, and David said, "What have I done? Is there not a cause?" The question, "Is there not a cause?" should burn in us a reaction of, "Yes, there is a cause." There was a cause then, and there is a cause now. A cause to be here. A cause to prepare. Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? Can he defy Jehovah? Who are the wicked who surround us in the world today, 2024? Can they defy Jehovah? Ought we to be fearful of them? No. As the courage David had, so ought we to have. Did David rise up and stand against the evil? Ought we to rise up and stand? Is there a cause? Is there not a cause? Yes, there is a cause

to do all that Brother Weaver has just talked about. To further the question, how many causes are there?

There is a cause to fight for today, to stand for, to preserve your own life, your family, your family of faith, and the theology handed down to us, that it might continue to our children. There are causes worth preparing for, a cause to serve our Lord in His kingdom. Is our cause to be a remnant, if our Lord calls us to it, to preserve all these things and fulfill all these causes? Now the question is, does God need us? Did God need David? No, God doesn't need anything or anyone. He doesn't need Brother Weaver, you, or me, but He called David for the purpose. Our Lord calls Brother Weaver to that purpose, and He has called you to the purpose. Will you answer that call? Our only response can be to the question, "Is there not a cause?" Yes, there is a cause. Let us rise and answer that calling as David did, and we will gain the victory as David did.

The Necessity of a Biblical Mindset

Let's open our Bibles to Luke chapter 9, verse 51. The title of the message is "Mind Set." The Bible says, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." There's much in the Bible concerning the mind. The truth is that everything stems from our minds; our minds control our actions and certainly control our lives. I've pointed out many times that the mind is the understanding. Occasionally, when you read the word heart, it refers to affection, but most of the time it refers to the heart, because Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." So it's the heart that does the thinking, and that's why Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Now hold in Luke 9, but turn back to Matthew chapter 15, and let me show you this. Our Lord is speaking, teaching His disciples, and look what He says, beginning with verse 18. In fact, let's begin reading with verse 15. Matthew 15, verse 15: "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable."

And Jesus said, "Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth

into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Our Lord says in verse 18, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart." What is the first thing that comes from the heart? Verse 19: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," and then murders, adulteries, fornications. You can't do any of these things without thinking. Everything in your life comes from your heart or from your mind or from your understanding. If I reach down and pick up this pair of glasses, I've already thought about the fact that I'm going to do it. It's impossible to commit adultery without thinking. I've heard people say, "Well, Brother Weaver, it just happened. I didn't plan it." That's hogwash. You thought about it well before you ever did it. "Well, I didn't mean to steal. The money was just there." No, you thought about it before you ever took it. You can't act or move without everything coming from your mind.

So the point is it's impossible to act without the mind, without thinking. I've heard people say, when they've done something very stupidly, "Well, I guess I was not just thinking." No, you were thinking, you were just thinking stupidly. Let me give you a good illustration. One is that our mind actually controls our actions. I had a good friend years ago, who's now dead. He was a very talented carpenter. He could build anything. In his house, around there, for their children, they had a swimming pool. He was going to do some work out by the swimming pool, and he had an electric drill, and he was drilling into the concrete.

And the bit got hot. He thought, I'll cool the bit and dip it into the water, and he was instantly electrocuted. Did he think? Yeah, he thought, but he did not think it through. He did not think, this is not just going to cool this bit, it's going to electrocute me. His mind was working, but it was certainly a stupid thought.

I've seen videos online of people who very stupidly look into the barrel of a weapon to see why it didn't fire. There is one, I suppose

it's still up, of an Islamic terrorist who looked into the barrel when it wouldn't fire, then stupidly hit it on the ground, and of course it shot himself in the head and killed himself.

We do things without understanding what we're doing. So what I want to emphasize today is mindset. Everyone knows the implication of a set mind. We use that phrase all the time, especially in reference to individuals and action: he set his mind on finding work, on marrying that girl, on doing certain things. We understand that everyone has a mindset.

Now the question you have to ask is this: do you have a biblical mindset, and do you have a biblical mindset on every subject? You say, Brother Weaver, I can't think of every subject. Really? The Bible tells you in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that you're responsible to bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ. If you're responsible to bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ, you must learn to think biblically on whatever you're thinking about. I don't care if you're thinking about marriage, work, buying an automobile, or anything else. You need to learn to think biblically on every subject.

We have people saying, his mind was set on being a martial artist, a carpenter, a welder, a grocer, or whatever. We understand that when we talk about someone having a mindset, nothing is going to stop him, nothing is going to change his goal. That mind is set and he's going to accomplish what he wants.

Now, the truth of the matter is this: we need to make sure that we have a mindset when it comes to Scripture. There are not very many passages that will say, "Here's a mindset," but there are many passages that will show you the exact same truth, although different words are used. Let me show you. Let's go in our Bibles to Genesis chapter 31, and notice verse 21. This is about Jacob. The Bible says, "So Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled." Now that's verse 20. Look at verse 21: "So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead." So what did he do? He set his face. He set his mind. In other words, that mind was absolutely set on going home. Nothing was going to stop him. If you would turn right over to the book of

Numbers, chapter 24. Here it is again. Look at verse 1. Now we're talking about Balaam. The Bible says that when Balaam saw that it pleased not the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. In other words, he went to bless them because he knew that God was not going to curse them. When you look at 2 Kings chapter 12 and verse 17, and let me just quote it: "Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it." Now listen carefully: "And Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem." What does that mean? I'm determined to fight against Jerusalem. I'm determined to conquer it. I'm determined to make sure that that place is mine. It was a set mind. Now, when you go back to the book of Luke, chapter 9, and you look at verse 51, you're now referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Bible says, "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

The word "steadfastly set" is from the Greek stērizō, which means to make stable, to set fast, to confirm in one's mind and establish. When He set His face, He was confirming in His mind, setting in His mind, that He was going up to Jerusalem to die. Nothing was going to stop Him from doing His Father's will. The word prosōpon denotes the countenance that is on one's face based on the determination of his mind. You could look at my face and tell whether or not I'm angry, whether or not I'm happy, whether or not I'm determined. In other words, our mindset is usually demonstrated by our face. That is why the Bible said, "He set His face." Now, here's why. If you look over in Luke chapter 13, verse 33, our Lord says, "Nevertheless I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." So He said, "My face is..."

My mind is set. I am going to fulfill my Father's will. I am going to die. Several quotes from different authors on this verse show how everyone understands this is exactly what the set face is: a mindset. Number one, he steeled his forehead against all discouragements. Number two, the readiness and resolution of our Lord Jesus in prosecuting His great undertaking for our redemption and salvation. Number three, He steadfastly set His face, that is, after proper and mature deliberation, He chose now to

go up to Jerusalem and firmly determined to accomplish His design. One more: He determined to go to Jerusalem, or he set out resolutely. When a man goes toward an object, it may be said, he set his face toward it. The expression here means only that he resolved to go, that is, he had a mindset, and it implies that he was not appalled by the dangers, that he was determined to brave all and to go up in the midst of his enemies and to die.

If there is any question over those statements, look in your Bibles to Isaiah 50 and verse 7, which will verify everything I have just read. Isaiah 50:7: "For the Lord God will help me; therefore I shall not be confounded. Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." That is concerning our Lord. Verse 6 refers to the Lord: "I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Then He said, "I have set my face like a flint." Clearly, "like a flint" means our Lord's face was hardened toward the end His Father had ordained. His mind was set to accomplish it. He was not going to die outside of Jerusalem. He was determined to do exactly what God demanded.

This truth should greatly influence our lives. We must understand that we too have mindsets. We also must understand that we normally have mindsets, but our mindsets must be biblical, and they must be biblical on every subject. Let me tell you very briefly about one mindset that we should have, and I am going to show you why I am saying this. We should have one mindset that we are going to love our Lord Jesus Christ the way that He commands and the way that He demands.

Look back to Matthew chapter 22, verse 37. A lawyer asked our Lord, "What is the greatest commandment?" Our Lord does not quote any of the Ten. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We're to love Him with all of our heart, all of our soul, all of our mind. If we love Him the way that He demands and deserves, we understand that we must have a mindset on that subject. This originated in Deuteronomy chapter 6, known as the Shema Israel. In Orthodox

synagogues, most of them will recite something like this: Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." And verse 5: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might." That's exactly what our Lord said in Matthew chapter 22. We must love Him with all of our mind, with all of our heart, with all of our soul.

Continue reading verse 5: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might. Now look what he says. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, or in thy mind, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children. And shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the post of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land, which he sware to thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not, et cetera, and he goes on. But note what he says. He says, you're to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and body. But then he said, if you love Him that way, if you've got that kind of mindset, he said, in these words which I command you shall be in your life.

If we're talking, walking, writing, dreaming, and placing His words before our eyes, we understand that He is central in our lives, and His Word is central. His words, His truth, are the warp and woof of our being. It's impossible to separate us from His words if we have the mindset we need toward Him. Our Lord said in John chapter 6 that He is the bread of life. We live on Him. We live on His words. We have to walk pleasing unto Him. There was a special promise in Isaiah 26:3: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." How to keep your mind on Jesus Christ? Keep your mind on Jesus Christ by keeping in your mind His Word. Whether walking, talking, working, what does His Word say in this area? How does His Word apply to me?

So you must consider then that there are precepts and there are principles in the Word of God that you and I must learn and hold to tenaciously. I've had people say, "Boy, I wish the Bible covered every instance of everything that could ever happen, and it was there in black and white." If God did that, you would never be able to read the Bible all the way through, and you'd never be able to carry one around. But what God has done is He's given us everything that we need in precept and in principle form, and we need to have a mindset on this. The Bible says that our Lord steadfastly set His face. That is, He steadfastly had His mind set. We're talking about, in reality, obedience and disobedience. Because if we have a biblical mindset, we're going to be obedient. If we do not have a biblical mindset, we're going to be disobedient. And you have to remember this: that God's blessings always follow obedience, and God's curses always follow disobedience. Here's why I'm telling you this. Look in your Bible to Luke chapter 12, verse 29. He said, "And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink."

And then he says this: "Neither be ye of a doubtful mind." If you have a doubtful mind, you do not have a mindset. Actually, this word, meteorizo, is a metaphor taken from ships that were tossed in the sea by the wind and by the waves. So he said, "And be not of a doubtful mind." So someone who has a doubtful mind is unsure, agitated, anxious, perplexed. In other words, he doubts everything: his course, his direction, his actions, his thoughts. Don't be of a doubtful mind. That's what he said: "Be ye not of a doubtful mind." Now, a doubtful mind is absolutely contrary to Scripture. So listen to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 17. God says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." Now, if you've got a doubtful mind, you're unwise. If you've got a doubtful mind, you do not understand what the will of the Lord is. And the word for unwise is the word aphron, which means foolish, unwise, stupid, one without reason and one without sense. So he says, "Be not stupid." That's what he actually said. "Be not senseless. Don't be a fool," is what he's saying. "You understand what the will of the Lord is." And the reason we're in doubt at many times is because we don't know what the will of the Lord is.

We don't know how to act. We don't know how to think. We don't know how to move or how to proceed.

The Bible tells you in Proverbs chapter 25, verse 2, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." And so if our Lord then has made us kings and priests unto Himself, it's our responsibility to search out those precepts and those principles and to keep them in our lives so that we can love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul, and body. Look in your Bibles to the book of James chapter 1, verse 8: "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Wow! A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. You know what a double-minded man is? Actually, the Greek word is dipsuchos. It literally means a double-souled man. A double-minded man—it's someone with basically two faces, two minds. He's a wavering, unstable, uncertain individual. He's an individual that's divided in his interests. And so God says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Who wants to be around an unstable man? Who wants to be around someone who never knows which end is up and what to do, how to act, and what to say? They're always confused. They're always causing heartache and anxiousness and problems. I'm just simply saying, a double-minded man, He said, is unstable in all his ways. We cannot be of a doubtful mind, and neither can we be of a double mind in light of what is going on in our country.

We cannot be of a doubtful, double mind in light of what is going on in our state and community. We are facing multiple threats in our nation. We are staring at an economic collapse. You say, "I'm making more money now than I've ever made in my life." I understand. But it's more worthless than it's ever been. I've told people, and they just smile. In fact, I told some folks last night, when Alice and I got married 61 years ago, I used to give her 10 bucks a week to buy groceries, and I'd kind of fuss at her if she didn't bring two or three of it back. Can you imagine that two people could live a whole week on six or seven bucks? That would be meat, milk, bread, veggies, fruit, whatever we needed. You can't even buy a loaf of bread for that today.

We're looking at an economic collapse. The interest on the national debt is a billion bucks a day, though the national debt is a

big fraud and scam anyhow. If I had time, I could tell you about the hyperinflation in Germany in 1923, when the Deutschmark was absolutely worthless—they wallpapered their houses with it. One of my favorite stories is about the German woman who had a wheelbarrow full of money. She was on her way to the bakery to buy a loaf of bread and saw a fight. She put her wheelbarrow down and parted the people to see who was fighting. When her curiosity was satisfied, she turned around and someone had emptied the wheelbarrow of all the money and stolen the wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow was worth more than the money.

We're facing an economic collapse, and the power grid possibly going down. Our power grid has not been updated since the 1970s. California was taken offline by someone who shot up some of the huge transformers. There is only one manufacturer of high voltage transformers, and if you placed an order today, it would take six months to a year to get one. We're not only talking about an EMP from China or North Korea. Talk about the solar flares—the Carrington effect, where all the telegraph lines were shut down about a hundred years ago, 1849 I think it was, 18-something. It was a solar flare. I get notices from an astronomical laboratory in Australia every day basically, and they send me all about the solar flares, when they originate, their intensity, and when they disappear. Sometimes I get a dozen of them a day, because the sun is continually shooting out these solar flares.

And all you have to do to take down the... By the way, did you read just this past month where some Iranian hacker shut down the power grid in Pennsylvania? Yeah, it was one of the northern cities. An Iranian hacker shut it down. I'm simply saying we're facing an economic collapse and a failing power grid. Not only that, and I'm being very precise when I say this, we are facing one of the most corrupt and treasonous administrations that has ever been in the seat of power in years. The collapse of our nation and our way of life is at hand.

God has allowed me—and I know Dr. Bowen and several others—to live long enough to see changes in this nation, in our state, in our community, and in people. When I was a teenager, if I wanted to see a cop I had to go uptown and look around because

there were so few. Back then, at least most people lived by the Ten Commandments. They may not have been Christians, but they at least had morality. When I was much younger, my father used to take us down to Miami, Florida, where relatives were, for a two-week vacation every year. We never locked the house or moved expensive equipment anywhere. When we came back after two weeks, everything was exactly the way we left it. You try that today. All I'm trying to say is there have been changes.

Now, Christian principles no longer hold sway in our Congress, in our judicial system, or in our administrative offices. I have friends right now fighting injustice through the courts, and even the higher courts are just as corrupt as the day is long. It doesn't really matter to them about truth. So let me make something exceedingly clear: I'm certainly not advocating revolution or sedition, but I am advocating a biblical mindset when it comes to our defense, our families, and our property. You have to know how to act biblically and scripturally during times of great stress and anguish. I have endeavored for years to get pastors and Christians to train in multiple ways, one of which has been self-defense. You would be astounded at how long it took me to get preachers out here to train with weapons. Read history: the movers and shakers during the War for Independence were pastors. Jonas Clark, at Lexington and Concord, when Sam Adams and John Hancock asked if his men would fight, said, "Yes, for this very hour, I have trained them." Look at Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg and James Caldwell. The same was true during the War of Northern Aggression. The pastors are responsible to train their people. We need to be trained not only in self-defense, but medically, in communication, and in a whole lot of areas.

For instance, we do have a class coming up February 10 and 11 on survival trapping. I've had people tell me, Brother Weaver, I don't know how to clean a chicken, gut a deer, or skin a squirrel. The point is this, folks: if everything goes down like they're saying it will, we're going to be back in the 17th and 18th century, and you better know some of these things. You better know how to plant a garden, have heirloom seeds, and have whatever you need so your family can survive. You have to have a biblical mindset. Now, listen to me. If we're going to protect our families, we're not going to do it

with a doubtful mind or a double-minded, double-souled individual. It's not going to happen. You're not even going to protect anyone else.

You remember what the Bible says. Our Lord, when He was asked, what is the greatest commandment? He said the first one is this, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind.' And the second is likened to it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' What does that mean? That means if I love myself, and I'm willing to protect my life, if I love Omar as myself, I'm willing to protect him. If I love Gordon as myself, I'm willing to protect him. In other words, I have a duty and a responsibility to protect my neighbors just like I have a duty and a responsibility to protect myself. So how in the world can I protect my family if I cannot even protect myself? And how can I protect my neighbor if I can't even protect my family? I'm just asking these questions. So here's my question. Have you developed a biblical mindset when it comes to the defense of your life, your family, and your property?

Do you know what God demands and commands? Do you know what He allows and what He does not allow? Let me tell you something. When someone is attacking your home and attacking you, it's too late for you to try to figure out what God allows you to do. It's just too late. The truth of the matter is, when your life is on the line, when your family's life is on the line, you will have wished that you'd really learned to operate your weapon and to operate it smoothly. I want to tell you something. Every weapon will malfunction.

Most malfunctions are induced by the user—an improper grip, all kinds of things like that. But if you do not know how to correct a malfunction quickly, easily, and naturally, you're going to be in trouble. It's just that simple. You will have wished you'd learned that, but you didn't. You'll wish you'd practiced more often.

It boggles my mind when I think about all the scenarios that could possibly come up. You'll wish you'd spent more money on ammo. People ask me, "Brother Weaver, how much ammo do I need?" My response is always, "One more box." And that's the truth, because it's not just you you're preparing for, but your family

and your friends as well. It's too late to try to develop a biblical mindset once everything falls down. If you don't have a biblical mindset, you're going to be a quitter—you're going to give up, give out, quit, and die. It's just that simple. You should have this mindset: you're not going to allow evil to triumph. So many people at this point are going to play the pietist and say, "Well, I'm just willing to die for the Lord." Well, let me tell you something, folks.

I'm willing to die, and I'm willing to die for the Lord, but I'm not willing to die until He ordains it. The truth of the matter is, I had much rather the wicked die and the righteous live. Augustine, one of the early church fathers, said it like this: "Though defensive violence will always be a sad necessity in the eyes of men of principle, it would be still more unfortunate if wrongdoers should dominate just men."

I do believe that Larry Craig, the Senator, was right when he said that self-defense is God-given. It predates government and the Constitution, because God has ordained it. That is a fact. General Black Jack Pershing—he died in 1948—said this: "If you know how to shoot and are quite ready to shoot, the chances are you won't have to shoot." And that's a fact.

John Adams, one of our founders, said, "Resistance to sudden violence for the preservation not only of my person, my limbs and life, but of my property is an indisputable right of nature, which I've never surrendered to the public by the compact of society and which perhaps I could not surrender if I would." So he says it is simply a natural right to defend yourself.

We will get on some of this a little bit later, but in Nehemiah there is a verse. In fact, I am going to be looking at several verses later. But just think about this. If you do not possess the training that you need to protect yourself and your family, your neighbor, then you must require and you must maintain a biblical mindset about training. Nothing comes easy, nothing. Everything requires work. And when Nehemiah was building that wall, we will look at it a little bit later, but Nehemiah said they built the wall. Why? Because they had a mind to work. Do you realize that training is work? I tell people, when we go through the basic class, the basic class is hard work. It really is.

Because you have to learn all the principles, you have to learn muscle memory, all of this. It is just plain hard work. But when you get to the advanced class, that is where the fun part comes in, because all the hard work has been done. And someone says, well, you know, I would really love to train, but, you know, I just do not have any time. Really? May I tell you something?

Everybody has 24 hours in one day. It is not you do not have enough time. It is that you do not prioritize your time and that is not a priority for you. That is what it means. If you had a biblical mindset on defending yourself and your family and your property, you would have time. You would find time. Someone says, but you know, and I have heard this one, ammunition is so expensive. I understand.

But once again, sore funerals. You will wish you'd have sacrificed and had the ammo you needed and the training that you needed. So if you think you're going to rely upon the sheriff, his deputies, or the police to help you, you're mistaken. Because like I said earlier, once you call them, they're only 15 or 30 minutes away. It's just that simple. And I want to tell you this, whether you laugh or whether you cry, and those that hear this, it's still the absolute truth. Most cops, deputies, as well as police, cannot shoot. Now, there are exceptions. I understand that. I know some who are exceptions. I know some who train. But as a whole, they cannot. I have shot, besides sheriffs, besides deputies, besides cops, the worst student I ever had in my entire life out on the range was a cop. He couldn't shoot, he wouldn't listen, he muzzled himself and muzzled everybody else, and nobody wanted to be around him. I'm going to tell you one more quick story. The last time, I guess it was, Alice and I were at Front Sight. Front Sight is no longer in existence. It's been bought out by Prairie Fire. But the last time we were there, there was a class of deputies right next to our range. There were 40 deputies. 40 men in the class. 40 of us in our class. These deputies were not newbies. They were older men.

They were middle-aged, and some of them had been on the force for a number of years. But I knew the instructor and the range master. He would bring them over to watch our range, our students, and he told them, "You watch Pastor Weaver and Alice."

A lot of them got behind us. I know most of you don't ever get to see Alice shoot, but believe me, she can. She just really does not miss. We were making headshots from ten and fifteen yards, and every time I'd shoot, and every time Alice would shoot, those deputies were back there high-fiving. They'd turn around and high-five Alice. They came over every day for four days and watched the whole class, congregating behind Alice and me and the other students. We had to leave early the last day of class, so I walked over to the range master and said, "Look, these deputies have been coming over every day and watching us shoot. We've got to leave early. Would it be all right if Alice and I came by for about fifteen minutes and just watched them shoot?" He said, "Yes, you may come." After we gathered up all of our things and put them in the car, we walked in, and of course they were all sitting down. When we walked in, every one of them turned and looked at us just like that. Why are they looking at us? The range master came over and whispered in my ear, "I told them they were going to have to shoot against you and Alice." But that was not going to happen, and I knew that.

But now listen to this. I'm telling you the absolute truth. There's a man-on-man competition, and this was the time of day they were doing it. The very first thing you have to do: you have two men, one on the right, one on the left, and when they give you the sound, the buzzer, you have to come out and shoot and save a hostage. You have a whole hostage there, and you've got a little metal plate just about that wide and about that high, and you're at, what, 10 yards? You have to flip that plate over without hitting the hostage. Then, at about 15 to 20 yards, there's a full-size plate; you have to hit that plate, put it down, hit another plate, put it down. Whoever does that the fastest and successfully wins that round, and you keep doing this until there's one man standing. Well, when we got over all these deputies, we're doing this. If you hit the hostage, if you even graze the hostage, you're out. You lose. I am not making this up. 38 out of the 40 deputies kill the hostage, the first thing. Finally, only two did not kill the hostage, and one finally won. I thought to myself, "Lord, now I understand that bumper sticker, 'I don't dial 911.'" I'm simply pointing out the fact: we've got to have a biblical mindset. If you don't have that mindset, you're not going

to work, you're not going to train, you're not going to do anything except quit.

Now, I want to show you something. Turn in your Bible to 2 Timothy, chapter 1, and look at verse 7. I hope you can quote this verse. This is a wonderful verse. "For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." God has not given us a spirit of fear. Let me tell you something: if you have fear, it did not come from God. It may come from your own ignorance, it may come from peer pressure, it may come from the world, it may come from the devil, but it does not come from God. God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. You know what the word "sound" means? It means a mind that is rational, one without illusion, one that is purposeful, one that is deliberate, one that is set.

God gives us a set mind. Here's the problem in Christianity today: most professing Christians do not have a set mind on any subject—not just defense. They live as children who refuse to grow up, think, and apply truth. Mark this down: God requires you to think, to have a biblical mindset on every subject imaginable. So you do have a mindset. The question is whether it is biblical or humanistic—whether you are thinking rationally, biblically, scripturally, or just trusting whatever happens. God demands a biblical mindset. Scripture says, "Let this mind be in you which also was in Christ Jesus," and "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." God requires you to bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ. Do you have a mindset that is biblical and scriptural? Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and mercy. Teach us and give us a biblical mindset in all these areas. In Jesus Christ's name we ask and pray. Amen.

But He was sure to come. When will our currency or electrical grid go down? We don't know, but we must be ready. Oil was purchased by the wise virgins calmly and prudently during the day—no panic, frenzy, or last-minute struggle. They were in no danger as they bought that oil and were ready. The five received a blessing. The five foolish virgins weren't cast away or killed; the bridegroom did not kill them for their foolishness, but they certainly did not receive that blessing. If there is anything to be

ready for, for the sake of our families and church families, it is to be ready that we might receive a blessing. We can see the bad day and prepare for it. That is the encouragement of today: to be ready. The concept of preparing and being ready is clearly taught to us. Notice the preparation was physical—they bought oil to have on hand. Did the five foolish get real spiritual and pray for oil that the Lord might do a miracle inside their lamps?

The Lord can do what He would and bring a miracle, but it was not meant that we ought to just say, "Well, we'll just pray about it." No! There was a physical preparation that was rewarded with the blessing. They were foolish, and the Lord, being faithful to His nature, did not reward their foolishness. We cannot expect the Lord to reward us in our foolishness if we see the bad day and refuse to prepare for it.

Turn to John chapter 6, another well-known passage. Beginning in verse 5: "When Jesus then lifted up His eyes and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, 'Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?' And this He said to prove him, for He Himself knew what He would do. And Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them.'" Brother Weaver talked about the financial cost to preparations. "Two hundred pennyworth is not enough, that every one of them may take a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, 'There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many?'" We know the rest of the story: there was the multiplication. The Lord took what had been prepared by the lad.

Shame on the other 5,000. The lad prepared. Meager and modest as it was, the Lord brought the multiplication. It was in our Lord's hand to reward with a blessing. There was an economic cost to that meal. They tried to break it down: we need this many pennies in order to bring this about. Each portion had a value that related to money. It would cost. We could say, well, I need this many meals worth in the food supply, years worth, and all of this. We need to do what we can and the Lord can bless it. However, our Lord took what had been prepared, modest as it was, meager as it

was, and it was sufficient for the purpose of God. And it was more than sufficient. There were 12 baskets gathered up at the end.

So the question is, how much have you prepared in these things? The food put by, the ammunition, the equipment needed for farming by hand, gardening, whatever it might be. How much have you prepared? Our Lord, Jehovah Jireh, my provider, can take your modest and perhaps meager preparations and bless them and multiply them beyond all you can ask or think, according to Ephesians 3:20, according to His power.

If you would, Acts chapter 5, a final passage. We won't go into detail into this story either, but we're all familiar with it: Ananias and Sapphira. Acts chapter 5, verse 1: "But a certain man named Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, sold a possession," a financial ability of theirs. Verse 2: "And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, gave up the ghost. Great fear came on all them that heard these things.

I'm not suggesting the Lord would strike you dead if you don't buy enough preparations, not enough ammo, that sort of thing. But please know, as Brother Weaver said, each of us has an ability to purchase things. We all have the chance to sacrifice the enjoyments today, whether it's vacations, that extra quad, the boat, the motorhome, the house on the lake, whatever it might be. I'm aware of my own life, you're aware of your own life.

But how dare you begin to say, "I'd like to prepare. I think it's a great idea, but I just can't afford it." Whoa! Any one of us can afford modest and even meager preparations. So I encourage you, don't ever allow yourself to say, "I can't afford it." Any of us, the most humble and the poorest among us, can still do something. And the Lord can multiply that.

So, you're not lying to men. You're not going to lie to Brother Weaver. You're lying before the Lord. If you take the position, "Well, I'd like to, but I don't have a choice. I don't have money. I can't afford it." No, no, no. You can. You can do something that's between you and the Lord. How much is it? What's the dollar value? A thousand? Five thousand? Ten thousand? Five dollars? That's between you and the Lord. But I encourage you, don't lie about not being able to afford it. You're not lying to man, you're lying to God. How much money do you have extra to spend on everyone?

Defensive Mandates from Nehemiah 4

My challenge is, do not allow yourself to say, "I can't afford it." Brother Weaver went over that, so I'm going to move on. Scripture demands preparation. Was any excuse good enough for the five foolish virgins? What could they have said that was allowable, that they didn't have their oil ready? What excuse could we have to say, "Well, I didn't know about any of this collapse. I didn't know about any of this grind down stuff"? You've heard it today. It's your responsibility now between you and the Lord as He has enlightened your heart, opened your mind. No excuse is good enough to do what you can. Preparation in Scripture is commanded. It is demanded. How much do you have to prepare? Don't raise your hand. Don't give me a dollar value. How much do you have? You have something. How much do you have to spend? That's up to you. You do what you can, honestly, before the Lord. Allow Him to multiply the loaves and fishes. Everyone can afford something to prepare. Be honest before the Lord in your spending. Be wise, be frugal, be efficient, and the Lord will bless you in that. We prepare. We buy preparations. We're called preppers, that the Lord might be glorified in it. Amen. Jeremiah chapter 4, and we look, if you notice, at the first six verses, that is for sure. And I want to take just for a few moments and just review. The first lesson we learned, of course, was it must be understood that defense was not for weaklings, because Sanballat, of course, accused them of being weaklings.

Secondly, self-defense and biblical defense also mandates character and courage to see the work through. We talked about

that in Luke chapter 14 from our Lord. When I'm saying that it requires character and courage, there was an old saying that Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to put all the time. When I was in the university, you would have all these sayings everywhere. One of them was this: "You can borrow brains, but you can't borrow character." So that means this: I may not know a lot of, say, medical knowledge, but if I can get in Tony's mind and get him to teach me some things, as long as I have the character to put them in application and to bring them through, then I've got it made. But if I don't have the character to apply knowledge, no amount of knowledge is going to do me any good whatsoever. The third principle is defense requires sacrifice, and you have to be willing to sacrifice. The fourth principle requires dedication and determination. The fifth principle is we cannot give in to ridicule. We cannot give in to mockery. We must do what needs to be done.

Look in verse 9 of Nehemiah chapter 4, because I very quickly want to give you seven defensive mandates. This may surprise you, but the very first defensive mandate is prayer. Nehemiah said, "Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto God and set a watch against them day and night because of them." Why would prayer be our first defensive mandate? Because if the Lord does not protect us, then we are not protected. It's just that simple. The Bible says in Psalm 66:9, it is God who holds our soul in life. In Psalm 31:15, David said, "My times are in thy hands." Certainly our times are in God's hands. He does hold our soul in life. David once again said in Psalm 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it, and except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." If you read through the book of Psalms, take note how many times David says, the Lord is my defense, or the Lord is my fortress, or the Lord is my rock, or the Lord is my high place.

All these terms refer to the very defensiveness of God for His people. Our ultimate protection is not in our weaponry, not in our preparations, not in our abilities; our ultimate protection is in God Himself. I can be as prepared as I could possibly ever be: a weapon in every corner of my bedroom, a weapon lying on my nightstand, a weapon under my pillow. If someone breaks into my house with intent to murder me and my wife, and God does not awaken me in

time, all those weapons are useless. Or if I do wake up and I am unable to shoot straight, they are still useless. Our protection ultimately has to be of God and God alone. That is why the Bible says in Proverbs 21:31, "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord." Prayer for safety and deliverance is relying upon God, trusting in God, and recognizing His sovereignty and His providence. Just as when I went and preached yesterday in Milan, which was two to three hours away, I asked the Lord for safe travels there and safe travels back.

I realize he must protect, and certainly that is true. David prayed many prayers, and you will find a lot of them in the book of Psalms. In Psalm 34 and verse 4, he said, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me from all of my fears." And then in Psalm 66 and verse 19, he said, "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayers." Hold Nehemiah chapter 4, but turn back to 2 Chronicles chapter 13. 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and then 1 and 2 Chronicles. In this chapter, there was a war between Israel and Judah. The Northern Kingdom often fought against the Southern Kingdom. Israel had fallen into idolatry in worshipping the golden calves that Jeroboam had built. Jeroboam, the king of Israel, came against Abijah, who was the king of Judah. In 2 Chronicles 13, verse 3: "And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even 400,000 chosen men." So Judah has 400,000 men. "Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with 800,000 men, chosen men being mighty men of valor." So Judah now is outnumbered 2 to 1.

Just stop and think about this. Seemingly, Judah is going to be overrun. They're going to be devastated. But although Judah was outnumbered 2 to 1, yet the Bible tells us Judah prevailed and won the battle. And I might say it was a very decisive battle because they literally slaughtered the Israelites. If you look in verse 17, "And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter. So there fell down slain of Israel 500,000 chosen men." Can you imagine going out to battle with 800,000 men and having 500,000 of them slain? Here's the question. Why did Judah prevail? Well, if you'll look in verse 18, "Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed." Why? Because they relied upon the Lord God of their

fathers. In other words, they had prayed, they relied upon God. Trust in the Lord and relying upon Him means that He is your protection. And by the way, let me point this out too. Trusting in the Lord and relying upon Him does not mean that you do not have to fight. They had to fight. But at the same time, they were trusting Him and looking to Him for victory. You're not trusting in your flesh. You're not trusting in your abilities. You're trusting in Him.

Let me give you a quote by Adam Clarke. He said this: "The strongest confidence in the protection and favor of God does not preclude the use of all or any of the means of self-preservation and defense, which His providence has put in our power. While God works in us to will and to do, we should proceed to willing through the power he has given us to will, and we should proceed to action through the power he's given us to act. We cannot will, but through God's power; we cannot act, but through God's strength. The power and the use of it are two distinct things. We may have the power to will and not will. We may have the power to do and not act." Therefore, says the apostle, seeing God is wrought in you these powers, you work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Now, he's not saying you have to save yourself, but he's saying you have to do what God has put in you. And if God puts it in you, then you should bring it out. That is for sure. So prayer then is absolutely mandatory in defense. I don't know about you, but if I'm in trouble, I'm going to be praying. And I'm certainly going to be praying if somebody is shooting at me or somebody trying to attack my family. So the very first biblical mandate for self-defense is prayer. The second biblical mandate for defense is situational awareness. Situational awareness.

Look back in Nehemiah chapter 4. He says, "Nevertheless, we made our prayer to God," verse nine, "and set a watch against them." That is situational awareness. They not only prayed, they actually acted. They ended up setting a watch.

Although they trusted in God for deliverance, that does not mean they did not have to pay attention or be aware of their surroundings. Our Lord told his disciples in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 41, "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." So he says, watch and pray. You not only pray, but you also act. Notice something else in verse 9: "Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God and set a watch against them day and night because of them."

In other words, they said we're not going to be caught by surprise. We're going to have sentries on duty day and night. We're going to be aware of our situation. I'm much afraid today that most people are so easily caught off guard and so easily surprised because most of us do not have situational awareness. How many times do we pull up to a convenience store and park and just walk in?

We never look around in the parking lot or inside the store before we go in. We don't do that with banks, motels, or anything because we're not aware of our surroundings. I watched on the internet a woman walking by, working on her phone, step into an open manhole. How do people not kill themselves? No one hardly pays any attention whatsoever. I mentioned earlier cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance occurs when a person holds two contradictory beliefs at the same time. You could say, "Brother Weaver, I believe everything you've taught today. You've showed me scripture after scripture. I know what you're telling me is true. I know it's biblical." We're never going to be in a situation where we're going to need it. It's never happened here before. Therefore, I conclude it's probably never, ever going to happen again. We have cognitive dissonance. Another example is when we see all these people illegally coming into our country, all young, military-age men, and we say, oh, they're just refugees looking for a new life. Really? That's cognitive dissonance. When we have been threatened over and over, that's cognitive dissonance. That's when you say, well, we've got the best politicians that money can buy, and they're never going to betray us or do anything to harm us. Really? Everything they've done is to harm us. Just look at COVID. Not just the vaccinations. The very fact that it was developed in our own country before it was ever sent to China.

The CIA and the FBI have already been linked to all of this stuff. David Martin has all kind of lawsuits against these people because

of it. When we think that nothing like this is going to ever happen, most people are so programmed by their TVs, they've just been brainwashed, and they think that nothing will ever, ever happen. The truth is that most Christians do not even watch and pray. Oh, we'll pray some, but we don't really watch. We're not really paying any attention. There is no situational awareness in our lives, not only for our safety and our defense, but even spiritually speaking. You're not looking out where we will be attacked. Here is where the world gets the best of us because we're not aware of what the world can do and what the world will do. That is for sure. And we think we'll never, ever have to be in a position that we will have to fight and defend our lives and defend the lives of our family. And if you think that you're just mistaken, you are indeed washed thoroughly with cognitive dissonance. Now, here's the third. The third aspect of a biblical defense mandate is to be alert to a surprise attack.

Look at verse 11. He said, "And our adversary said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst of them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease." So we're talking about a surprise attack. Surprise is a very strong element in war. If one can surprise his enemy, that means he catches his enemy off guard. An excellent illustration is when General George Washington defeated the Hessians in the Battle of Trenton, New Jersey. He knew the Hessians, Germans hired by George III to fight against the colonists, would be drinking themselves drunk in the celebration of Christmas. So Washington crossed the Delaware River on the night of the 25th of December, 1776, and attacked the Hessians early on the morning of December the 26th. After a brief battle, two-thirds of the Hessians were captured. They were totally surprised, totally caught off guard, and they lost the battle, and the Americans won.

And of course that stimulated the war for independence as well. Now there's another excellent book. If you don't have it, I would encourage you to get it. It was written by Sun Tzu, who was a Chinese warrior. And it is filled with good military information. The title of it is The Art of War. And he has many excellent sayings. And one of his sayings was this: In conflict, direct confrontation will lead to engagement and surprise will lead to victory. So understand this. When somebody is surprised, usually you have

one or two responses. You either fear or you freeze. Have you ever had someone jump out at you when you were not expecting it? I made the mistake one time of slipping up behind Alice. I was not expecting her response. Oh, well, I'll tell you what. Sometimes she doesn't freeze. But, you know, people either they either get frightened and they run or they just simply freeze in place is what it amounts to. And when one freezes, it's because of unbelief. You're standing there, you're thinking, I can't believe this is happening. And I certainly can't believe this is happening to me. But it is happening. And so when you don't have a situational awareness, and when you are caught off guard by the element of surprise, that's when you are absolutely astounded. And you either freeze, or you just and fear run. Now, there's a verse in Jeremiah chapter 14 verse 4. I want you to listen. I'll just read it for you. Listen to this. Kerioth is taken. By the way, Kerioth is taken. Let me stop. Do you know a fellow in the Bible by the name of Judas Iscariot? The word Iscariot means man of Kerioth. So we're talking about the town of Judas. Listen to this. Kerioth is taken, and the strongholds are surprised. And then he goes on to say this, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pains. So what in the world can a woman delivering a child in agony and pain, what can she do to fight? Absolutely nothing. So when God surprises his enemies, that's the way it will be. And oftentimes our enemies use the element of surprise against us. And if you will notice, especially the communists, they always like to surprise you when you're in church, or when you are at home, when you're asleep, when you're in your own environment. And what they're trying to do is create as much terror in you as they possibly can, because these are the places where you are the most safe, or at least you believe that you're the most safe. That is why they always attack usually in churches as well.

The fourth biblical mandate for defense is that we must be aware of those who fraternize with the enemy. Look at verse 12: "And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you." The "them" refers to Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabians, and all these other people. Ten times they said, "They will be upon you."

A few scholars take this verse positively, saying these Jews were simply bringing intelligence to Nehemiah and his workers. However, most scholars consider it negatively: these Jews who lived close to Sanballat and Tobiah were trying to dissuade their brethren from the work by repeating the enemies' threats. They were even more fearful than those with Nehemiah because they dwelt close to the enemy. Remember, the enemy had already threatened to come in and slay them, so these people living near Sanballat and the armies of Samaria came saying ten times, "You can't get away, you can't escape, they're going to kill every one of you."

Albert Barnes interprets this verse: "The Jews who dwelt by the Samaritan border came to Jerusalem and tried to withdraw their contingents of workmen from the work, representing to them the impending danger and saying, 'You must return to your homes and so escape.'" John Gill said, "From all places which you shall return unto us, they will be upon you. Come which way you will, so that you are in the utmost danger from all places where you are repairing and rebuilding. Return to us that you may enjoy peace and prosperity with us under Sanballat and escape the wrath and fury you are now exposed to. And from all places we come that you may return to us." So these Jews, though they pretended to be friends to their brethren, yet seem to be in friendship with their enemies and sought to discourage them and weaken their minds and cause them to cease building.

In other words, you've got to be aware of these people who are basically frightful, who are afraid, and who are fraternizing with the enemy. There will always be fearful individuals who will be willing to compromise for their own safety and their own security, and they could care less about you or anyone else. They're only interested in themselves—not in the work, not in truth, not in righteousness, not in peace, not in principle. Ignorance and a lack of character are only conducive to fear.

In light of this, the next thing you must understand is that there will always be traitors. There will be men who will sell their souls for their own monetary advantage, for power, for prominence, for prestige. If you don't believe that, just look at Washington, D.C.

Look at Atlanta. Look in any state capitol that you want to. I would say you could probably find enough congressmen to number on one hand who really care about the Constitution and liberty and freedom. You know the scandals that the Biden family has been through, the scandals that all these congressmen have been through. I want to ask you a question. How is it that you can go to Congress and make $80,000 to $100,000 a year, and in four or five years, you're a multimillionaire? How is that possible, especially when you're spending millions just to get there, just to win an election? When you stop and think, I read the other day, for Nancy Pelosi, if she died, she would leave her daughter five different mansions, a jet, and I forget how many millions.

All I'm trying to say is this: just look around, because you better be understanding the fact that there are people who will fraternize with the enemy for their own benefit. There will be people who will be absolute traitors just for their own benefit as well. Here's the fifth defensive mandate, and that is we need to be prepared to fight and to be encouraged in the Lord. So look at verses 13 and 14. Look what Nehemiah said. "Therefore said I, that in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren."

Now let me make some obvious deductions from these verses. First, in order to fight, you must have weapons to fight with, and you must be trained in their use. Weapons that do not work are useless, and they are useless if you do not know how to work them or use them. If you cannot quickly, easily, and efficiently clear malfunctions to make your weapon work, you are not prepared to use it. If you cannot get your weapon out in a timely manner, you are not prepared. If you cannot shoot straight and accurately most of the time, you are just not prepared to use your weapon. That is all there is to it.

Note something else in this passage. The wall gave them a defensive position, so he set the people behind the wall for their

safety and protection. Defensive positions should be planned and built. Think about your land. If ten or fifteen men attacked your family, you cannot just hide in the house. Most modern houses will not stop a bullet, period, unless it happens to hit a stud. And if it is a .50 cal, a stud will be blown to pieces and the bullet will keep going. Most houses are not designed to be spared from fire. I am simply pointing out that he put the people behind the wall because it was already prepared and was a defensive position.

Now hang on to this one. Look at verse 13 again. He said, "Therefore said I in the lower places behind the wall and in the higher places, I even set the people, after their families." The whole family could fight. Men, does your wife know how to shoot? Does she know how to use your weapons? Do your children know how to shoot and use your weapons? You say, "But I can use them." Well, suppose you get incapacitated or killed. The point is that the families fought together. I wish I had time to tell you about some of the women in the American Revolution and the War of Northern Aggression. You would be astounded to read how one woman held about ten or fifteen English soldiers captive until her husband got home. These were families.

Now, if you will note verse 14, I want you to look at this. He said, "And I looked up and rose and said unto the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them. Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." Now, the very first command is do not be afraid of them. Fear paralyzes. I wish you would go through the Bible and just underline every time God says, "Fear not." Did you know the Bible says in Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." David said, "I will not fear what man can do unto me." If you really and truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the worst that man could do to you is send you to the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the worst. I'm just simply saying, the fear of man brings a snare.

Now I want you to watch this. In this passage, it also includes a second command, and that is, remember the Lord. Which simply means not only to trust in Him, rely upon Him, but remember

what He's capable of. What did He do to the Egyptians? What did He do to the Hittites and the Philistines and the Jebusites? All I'm saying is this, when you remember the Lord, you remember His power, you remember His grace, you remember His mercy, you remember everything that He has done in times past.

And then He says this, if you look in this verse again, the third commandment that He gives is this, He said, "and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters and your wives and your houses." God gave Canaan to Israel, but Israel had to fight. God gave David victory after victory, but David had to fight. There are some things that cannot be achieved without fighting. I like what Tim Larkin said. He said, "Violence is not always the answer. But when it is the answer, it's the only answer." And that's true. Did you know that God is a man of war? The Bible says in Exodus 15:3, "The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name." When you get to Isaiah 42:13, "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies." The Lord is a man of war.

Now here's a truth that has to be grasped. Once you understand that God has commanded you to fight, you must know how to fight, and you must be determined to fight. And you must know when to fight and when not to fight. Look, if you would, in verse 15. When you are prepared to fight, when you know how to fight, when you're willing to fight, most of the time you don't have to fight. Verse 15: "And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work."

So Nehemiah had the people ready. Nehemiah said, "We will fight." He had them in a defensive position. And since the enemy then found out that, hey, these people are not going to just roll over for us, they're not going to just bow down to us, they're not going to give up, they're not going to give in, they themselves turned around and went back. Here's the sixth defensive mandate.

Always err on the side of caution when your enemies are routed. Look at verses 16 and 17: "And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half

of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon." Wow. Always err on the side of caution.

They had given up, supposedly. They had left, supposedly. But Nehemiah said, "I'm not going to trust you. We're going to stay prepared. We're going to stay alert. And if we need to fight, we will fight." They kept their weapons with them. They kept their weapons on them. They were not going to be caught off guard. They were not going to be surprised. Now, I'm going to tell you something.

Since we are in Georgia, according to law, you have a constitutional right to carry your weapon wherever you go. There are some exceptions, I understand, like the federal courthouses or the courthouses. And there had been a prohibition even carrying in the post office. However, one judge just this past week ruled that they could not ban weapons out of the post office, that it was unconstitutional. Wow. Well, we'll see where that one goes. But the truth of the matter is you have a constitutional right to carry. You ought to carry. You ought to always be carrying. I'm just simply pointing out the fact that it is your right. It is a constitutional right. It is a biblical right.

And so you have to ask yourself, do you care? Do you care? And you should. I never will forget, I was preaching in South Carolina, and there was a banquet first, and then I was to preach afterwards. And there was one lady there with a son who had an affliction. And while we were eating, the young man had an episode. He was having some type of seizure.

So I jumped up and ran back to him along with some others, and I was helping pick him up from the floor. Someone else had already called for an ambulance, and we were getting him to the door. The mother said, "My purse, my purse." I said, "I'll get it for you." It was one of those long purses, kind of heavy and wide, with just two handles. When I went to pick up that purse, I looked in there, and there was a pistol right on top. I said, "Yes, ma'am, here

it is," making sure she got that purse. But the truth of the matter is, it's a constitutional right and a biblical right. We have a right to carry.

Now, I want you to listen carefully to this one. Look at verses 18 and 20, because here is the seventh defensive mandate: we must have a rallying point. In verse 18, he says, "For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so built it." Now look at this: "And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, 'The work is great and large, and we are separated from the wall, one far from another. In what place, therefore, do you hear the sound of the trumpet? Resort you thither unto us. Our God shall fight for us.'" He said we're separated. We've got a trumpet. Whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet, you come here.

We don't have trumpets, but we do have handheld radios and cell phones. The point is there was a rallying point. A rallying point could mean several things. First, it could refer to a point where a breach is about to be made—those defending that point are insufficient to hold it. A rallying cry could come, and the others who are not fighting as fiercely or have such a heaven-forced heavy force against them can come and help the point where it is about to be breached. They come and help stem the tide and clear up those who are fighting fiercely at that particular point. That is one of the rallying points. Now, another rallying point is this.

That would be where you have to move to a secondary position. If we're defending at the gate and get overwhelmed, or the force is too great, we might meet back at the tree line—a rallying point, a secondary position to fight from. On your own property, you need to look at primary positions, secondary positions, sometimes even tertiary or third positions. A rallying point could also be a point where you gather together to initiate an attack or counterattack upon the enemy.

As you read through Nehemiah chapter 4, you have all these biblical mandates for defense, and this is exactly what Nehemiah did. According to Scripture, weaponry may be used to defend the church of God and the people of God, but it cannot be used to extend the church of God or the kingdom of God. We're not

conquistadors going around with a sword saying, "You either bow or else." But God oftentimes uses physical means when the church is attacked. According to our text, this last principle should be well understood: Everything that can be done should be done to secure defense and safety.

Look at verses 21 and 23: "So we labored in the work, and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Likewise, at the same time said I unto the people, Let everyone with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us and labor on the day. So neither I nor my brethren nor my servants nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that everyone put them off for the washing." He's saying we learned to look out for each other, to guard each other, to give up luxury. We banded together, sleeping in the same area for our defense, and did not even take our clothes off except for washing.

You have to do whatever has to be done to protect yourself and your family. It's just that simple. If you have to sleep with your brogans on, sleep with your brogans on. There's nothing wrong with that. You can put on a clean sheet. If you have to sleep hugging that AR-15, sleep hugging that AR-15. Do what needs to be done.

I'll tell this on him. My baby grandson, when he was a young boy, was so squeamish. If he saw someone vomit, he vomited. If he saw blood, it just threw him. I had a cow that was down, bloated with gas, and if you don't do something, they die. So I had a needle about this long, and I said, "Tripp, you have to help me with this cow. I'm going to have to put this needle through her ribs into her stomach to let this gas out."

He said, "Papa, I can't do that." I looked at him and said, "Yes, you can, and you will do it. You have to learn to do what needs to be done, period." He helped me hold that cow, I put the needle in, let the gas out, and that cow survived. Most of you know Tripp became a nurse before he became a logger, and then he married a nurse. Now he tells me what I need and what I don't need in some medical areas.

I'm just saying, folks, you have to do what needs to be done. That's all there is to it. Years ago, I was plowing and my family had all gone to dinner. I was trying to finish, and I had a sweep on the back. The sweeps were worn and came to a very, very sharp point. While I was trying to hurry and clean them off, I stepped right into one of the rears of those sweeps. It gouged into my leg, took a hunk of flesh out, and blood was going everywhere.

So I called Alice and said, "Tell your mother," who was an LPN, "to come over here and tell my sister," who was a registered nurse and head nurse at the operating room, "to come over here. I need them." When they arrived, I showed them my leg. They said, "Oh, you need to go to the emergency room." I said, "No, I don't need to go to the emergency room. I've got the lidocaine right here, the suture material right here, and the Betadine to wash it out with. You take care of it." "Well, we don't want to do this." I said, "Let me tell you something. Either you're going to do it or I'm going to do it. And I can't do it as well bending down as you can do it. So do it." And they did. And guess what? I don't even have a scar. No, no scar there. I'm just saying you have to learn to do what you need to do. It's that simple. You have to say, "I am going to do it. I will look out for my husband. I'll look out for my wife. I'll look out for my children. I'll look out for my brother. I'll look out for my sister. I will do whatever needs to be done." You have to understand these biblical mandates, this biblical mindset. God gives us principles, God gives us precepts that we are to live by and we are to die by and we are to fight by. Do you remember that passage in 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17? "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness. Why? That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." Do you really believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? And do you really believe that it's profitable? And do you really believe that's everything you need that you might live a holy, righteous, godly life? That means this.

You must have that biblical mindset. It means you must understand these mandates. It means that you must be determined. It means that you must have the character and the consistency and the courage to do whatever needs to be done. It's

just that simple. And I want to tell you, the more you study the Word of God, and the more you apply the Word of God, the more determined you are going to be, and the more courageous you're going to be, the more character you're going to have, and the more you'll understand that God is a God of truth and a God of justice and a God of righteousness. And "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness," the Bible says, and "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." You have to understand, we're facing some very, very serious times. We better understand these mandates. We better prepare our hearts, our lives. We better prepare our families. We better prepare our children. If we want to survive, we must learn to help each other. We must learn to band together. We must learn to do whatever needs to be done. That brings me to this. Everyone has a different opinion about some things. Wonderful. Have all the opinions you want, but do not try to force them on everyone else. If there's a Bible principle, fine. We'll all bow to the Word of God. But we're not going to fight each other. There are too many enemies to fight. And the truth of the matter is, if you understand the biblical doctrine of illumination, I could teach all day long, I could teach all night long, but if God doesn't open your eyes, you're never going to see it, you're never going to understand it anyhow. And so what I need to do is just keep teaching and praying that God will open your eyes. What you would need to do is keep teaching and praying until God opens my eyes. We're not going to fight over little things. We've got too many enemies.

We can't take the attitude, "Well, I don't like this attitude, this so-and-so." Deal with that attitude later. Do what needs to be done, biblically, scripturally, for God's honor and glory and our good. Let's pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for your help, grace, and mercy. Teach us, O Lord, build us up in the most holy faith, and help us to prepare according to your word. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. 1 Samuel 17. I'd like to remind you of 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." Clearly a passage once again speaking of spiritual things. In 1 Samuel 17 we go to the familiar passage of David and Goliath.

Testing and Proving Your Preparations

1 Samuel 17:38. "And Saul armed David with his armor, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head. Also, he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go." That is, he attempted to go, for he had not proved it—he had not tested this armor, could he do it. He hadn't attempted it before. And David said unto Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I've not proved them." And David put them off him. David attempted to go to fight, but he'd not tested that equipment. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Was the armor deficient? Was the weaponry of poor quality? No, this was the king's armor, the king's weapons, the best money could buy. But for David, who had not practiced, trained, tested, and proved them, he put them away and rather went with his sling. He did, however, test and practice with his sling—an inferior weapon, but yet he had proved it. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. David held fast to that sling which he was accurate with, and truly he won the day.

I'd like to show you a little show and tell, just kind of fun here at the end. I'll simply point this in this direction. This is what's called a Kel-Tec Sub 2000. This is an actual weapon, so I will be careful with it. The bolt is locked back. It is in fact clear. This is just a 9mm, a fine gun. I paid $300 for it about 20 years ago, and I've had it ever since. The question is, what can this weapon do? If I have this weapon, I can rely on it. You might say, "What if I went against an Abrams tank with this little pea shooter?" As long as the Abrams tank has a dead battery and can't function, I'll take this trusty old pea shooter and take out the tank, one by one, if it's mechanically failed. Let's not despise inferior weapons just because there's something grander or more glorious over there, if it doesn't work. Saul's armor did not work for David. The sling won the day. We must prove these things. I'm just going to use the Kel-Tec Sub 2000 as an example. We all have many different weapons. There's a thousand examples we could go through. Notice, my Kel-Tec Sub 2000 is a nine millimeter. I own 9mm handguns. That's my handgun round.

I don't have 40s or 45s. This takes a Glock 17 mag. My only handguns are Glock 17s, so any and all of my Glocks take the same

magazine. I can have a chest full of magazines in my pouches and either go with my handgun Glock 17 or into my Kel-Tec Sub 2000. This is kind of a rifle with a longer barrel. How accurate is it? It's kind of made out of plastic, and it's got a weird situation to close the bolt, then to open it, bring it on a catch. Is this reliable in battle? How can I know? I need to test it and prove it. I need to take this out to the range, put some ammo through it, and find out what it's like. Twenty years ago when I bought it, I did shoot it. This is an iron pipe built in the construction. To shoot it, I'd want to bring some cheek weld up against it to get on the sights. But if I do that, I can't actually see through the sights. I have to put it against my bone to get my eyes low enough. When you shoot even the 9mm, this pipe hits your bone. This is a painful gun to shoot.

You wouldn't know that unless you tested it, unless you proved it. This doesn't really work for me. It's mine, I paid for it, but what do I do with it? Maybe this is a fine weapon for a younger man. Maybe I can give this to one of my sons whose smaller face can get on it. I can teach him the reloads and the malfunctions and get him on this weapon. And I need to know what can it do and what can it not do. There's no offense to the Kel-Tec Sub 2000 to know its abilities as well as its weaknesses. It's simply a firearm. And if you'll notice, it even folds in half. You can put it in a backpack. It's kind of cool. Is this a toy or is this actually a real weapon of war? These questions ought to be answered. I need to prove it. I need to prove what is good and hold fast to it. I'll give you one more example. This is a CFP-90. These were all the rage back in the early 2000s. On eBay, 100 bucks. This is the best backpack money could buy. There was a separate compartment here at the bottom so you could put your sleeping bag in the bottom. If anyone's packed a backpack, you know if your sleeping bag goes in the bottom of the main part, to pull your sleeping bag out, you're disrupting all of your other packing. In order to put a tactical backpack together, you need to know how to layer it.

What items are you going to get to first? These are all things you have to practice. Prove your system and your layering. Prove it. Test it. Practice it. And hold fast when you get a good program. I'm not telling you how to layer it. I'm saying you need to practice it.

I bought this 25 years ago off eBay. I spent my hard-earned money. Put it in storage. Recently, I pulled it out of storage. I knew I had a CFP 90, the finest backpack money could buy. Been in storage for 25 years. Would you know it, it had actually broken the plastic here. Whether in my storage it had rotted out, so I'm going to need to repair this. But I wouldn't know that unless I actually got it out, looked at it, tested it, improved it. This can be repaired and I'll repair it, but I needed to know that. If I had gone after this in the day of battle and it was broken, this is not the time to find that out. We need to be going through our things. Prove all things. Test all things.

Hold fast that which is good. So buying the preparations—we talked about spending the money. Buying these things is indeed the first step. Buying the equipment. What must come next is the testing, the proving. Put your hands on it. Take it out to the range. It's got to be used, tested, and proven. Hold fast, relying on that which has been proven to be successful, proven to be good.

To finish the passage, notice verse 40: "And he," that is David, "took his staff in his hand and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had." David selected five smooth stones, not random stones, but fine stones for flinging through the air—hand-selected smooth stones. Why five stones? It only took one stone to defeat the giant. David knew God would give him the victory. Why did David choose five stones? Why take four stones he didn't end up needing? Why choose any stones at all? Why not just pray the giant down, as we've alluded to earlier? Because David was being consistent with tactical preparations. The Lord would give him the victory, but it was prudent and appropriate for David to get reloads. If the first one missed, he'd be ready again, in the victory of the Lord. David was consistent, faithful to proper military tactical process and procedure. It makes tactical sense to have reloads. It makes preparation sense for us to store up ammo. There's a foolish group within the church who just want to pray it all away. That is not what Scripture demands of us. We are fully reliant on the Lord, but it can't just be praying it out.

No, we are to prepare. We are to practice and prove that which is good. Our God, the Lord of War, will give us the victory, but we must also be consistent to be sensible with our tactical equipment and our preparations. Again, the Lord can multiply the loaves and fishes. The Lord can multiply the bullets and magazines. In our Lord's grace and victory, He might give us 31 rounds in that AR-15. I counted 30 and I still had the miracle. Thank the Lord, because here's the man charging at me. I've expended it, but the Lord gave the extra one. Let Him do it. David's victory and ours will always be firstly spiritual. But we must be faithful to the physical equipment, the physical preparation, the physical accumulation, and tactical action. So I encourage all of you in all of this concept of prepping and purchasing and preparing and all of this, prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Surely we need to purchase these things, whether it's food. Boil some of those beans, taste it. Get some of those freeze-dried meals, cook them up. Give them a taste. Do they need salt? What do you need to add to them? Prove all things, test all things, hold fast that which is good. Test theology, this theology that's been given to us. Prove it, prove the Lord your God, and hold fast to that which is good.

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