

1 Corinthians 13:11-13

Sunday 10/19/2003

I. A Change of Plans

I had a message already prepared that I was going to preach to you today, but the Lord just kind of changed some things. I appreciate all of you here. I really do. We are a young church, and we are just getting our feet on the ground. I guess it is a lot tougher when you are where we are at when you lose somebody.

I had Steve Bracken come up here and talk about Rex. I do not know anybody in all the world that loves people more than Steve Bracken does. I have known Steve Bracken all my life, and he is probably right up there with the truest friend anybody could ever have, as all of you are. I agree with him. I talked to him out in the hall. He looked, and we are here this morning. I know it is going to be rough this morning. I tried to kid myself into saying it would not be, but it is. Steve said it when he came out in the hallway. He just looked back and saw the empty chair where Rex and his boy were sitting all the time.

Rex loved his church. He really did. Steve brought him. Steve knew him from working at the Ford place. It is one of those things where he had a lot of trouble in his life. He went through a lot of things, like we all do. I agree with Steve. Steve just talked for 30 seconds out there, and the Lord just changed the whole thing of what I was going to do today. It is where we need to go.

I know there are a lot of situations. I look at it, and I know that he came out of a lot of problems in his life. He went through a divorce, and it was very hard on him and all of those things. I do not know all of the details, but I do know this: I know that he had come to the place where he had found a place that he was at peace at, and he really enjoyed it.

I read people's faces when I preach. You can tell if somebody is with you or somebody is not with you. You can tell if somebody is untouched with you or where they are turning you on or turning you off. Honestly, all your faces always are turned on. I appreciate that. You people are here because you love the Bible. That is what he saw here. That is what he saw. I would sit down up here and preach, and I would preach back there, and I would watch the smile on his face and his boy's. I would say something funny, and he would laugh. They were in it. They went with it all the way.

I agree with Steve today. I do not understand all of it either. Nothing devastated me more this week than when Steve called me and told me that they found him, had a heart attack, and found him dead. It was one of those things where it just kind of takes everything out of you. You go through all the emotions. I appreciate Rex so much. It was a thing where it just, for me anyhow, it will quite never be the same just because of the fact that I know that this church, in its small infant stage right now, where we are at, I know that this church met a need in his life. It was something that the Lord did that was in a unique way.

I look at the fact that God knows everything. We do not. But I believe this: I believe that the Lord, in a unique way, brought him here. God knew when he was going to die. The Bible says it

is appointed unto men once to die. We all get an appointment with death. I believe with all of my heart that God brought him here for whatever time he had left to settle, whatever maybe he had left to settle in his heart with the Lord, and really give him a taste of what the Word of God always is.

Steve is very broken up today, and I love Steve so much, and I understand that. But I told Steve, he looked back and saw the chair, and he just could not handle it. I told him, "You know what? This is the great thing. This is where it is at today. I am hurting. I know Steve is hurting. I know his wife and family are hurting, and I know that some of you are just hurting because you maybe did not really know the guy, but you love the guy who is one of us."

Let me just tell you this: I promise you this, if Rex had the choice to come back today, he would pass on it. He would not come back. He is with the Lord, and it has been tough for some of you this year. You lost your mama, but you know what? If she had the choice today, she would not come back.

Now I know what I want to say today, and I hope that God gives me the grace to be able to say it. I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. I just want to talk to you for a little bit today. We are going to put what we had for this week off. We will talk about it next week. We have to be flexible. When the Holy Spirit of God shows us something, we just need to focus on it.

II. The Corinthian Church and Childish Things

When Paul wrote, he wrote to the church at Corinth. The church at Corinth had come to the place that I hope we never get to. They had really lost the tenderness, not only toward each other, but toward other people. They had gotten like so many churches that it was just a thing where going to church was just going to church. There was no real purpose in it anymore. Everybody had their own spiritual mindset. Everybody had their own spiritual agenda, and they were doing their own thing. Paul wrote them the book of 1 Corinthians really to chew them out. We will talk about that more next week.

When he came to chapter 13, they were obviously messed up on the sign gifts, talking in tongues and all of that. Paul deals with them on that. But he says something that not only deals with the immediate issue of tongues, but it deals with the issues of life that really help us come to grips with things like today or things like that go on in our lives when we do not understand it.

1 Corinthians 13:11-13

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and Lord, I love You today. I pray, Father, that You will give us the wisdom and insight today to understand the Word of God and to

deal with the issues today, Father, that tug at our heartstrings. Lord, we just thank You, Father, for loving us. We thank You, Father, for being part of our lives, for this church, for what You have done here. Lord, we thank You for the men and women that have come since we have started, and Lord, for the good people that You have given us to love You and love Your Word, for the good times we have had in the Word of God.

We thank You, Lord, that at least we know that this church is doing what it needs to do. We saw it in the smile, we saw it in the smile of approval in the eyes of Rex and his boy, that they were glad to be here because the Word of God was doing in their lives, being preached the way it needed to be preached and touching those things that they needed. Lord, I pray You will help us today. I pray You will help us deal with the grieving process of the loss of somebody that, Lord, meant a lot to us. Lord, I know we are not a big church. We do not have like four or five hundred people. When somebody passes, it is a terrible thing and a tragic thing, but it kind of gets lost on all of the things that are happening. Lord, we are not there, and we feel this today. Lord, I thank You, Father, for all that You do. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

III. Understanding Through a Glass Darkly

Let me just say some things to you today. For the small time we have been together, we have had some weddings, and now we have had a death. We have had some heartache. We have had some tragedy. We have had some accidents. We have had all these things in life. Steve said up here this morning, and that is the reason I had Steve say what he said and talk this morning, because I know Steve, as I said, there is nobody that understands and loves people more than Steve does. He stood here and he said, "I do not understand what God is doing, and I do not understand what God has done." You know what? That is a statement that we are all going to make in life sooner or later.

I do not understand a lot of things that happened. I do not understand specifically why they. I do not understand why God would bring a man to a church when a man probably had not had the teaching and the preaching and the fellowship and the Word of God that he ever had in his life that he had here. I do not understand why God would bring a man here, get him settled in, get him so happy, and then take him home to be with the Lord. I do not understand why God would allow a boy that wants to struggle, he wants to do what is right, he wants to come to church, he has this, and God puts him into the protective umbrella of his father that his father says, "You can go to that church, come on and come," and then take that umbrella away. I do not understand all those things, but there are a lot of things I do not understand.

Paul says here, "When I was a child, I spake as a child." Right now, we are likened to children. I do not care if you are 60 years old, I do not care if you are 70 years old, I do not care how much time you spend in the Bible. You may have a grasp or an insight on spiritual things, but I want to tell you something: I do not care how spiritual any of us become. I do not care how versed we become in the Bible and how well we can trust God. We are still a child, and there will always be a time when we look at things in life and we see them through a glass darkly. That is just part of it.

I look at somebody that is doing what God wants them to do in their life and is on fire for God, and they get cancer and they die. I stand back and I look at that and I ask myself, "Why is that?" The only answer sometimes is that we look through a glass darkly. In this life, we do not always see everything the way God wants us to see it. It is part of the process of life, it is part of the process of growth, but right now, there are things in life that we just see through a glass darkly. We cannot see it clear.

I do not understand why little babies get born deformed. I do not understand that. I do not understand what God can get out of that. I know that He does. I am not questioning God in any of this. I believe that God is sovereign, and I believe that God knows exactly what He wants us to do. I just wish sometimes He would let us in on it. I am not saying that criticizing God because it is okay with me if He does not. I understand that in this life that we have to look through a glass darkly. We do not always see it the way we want to see it.

IV. God's Sovereignty and Our Limited View

There are a couple of reasons for that. God always wants to keep the edge to the place where He is God. If we understood everything that God was, everything that God did, if we focused on everything the way God wanted us to see it and understand it in the Word of God, hey, let me tell you what, there would be no need for God.

I believe the Bible is the Word of God. I believe it is the mind of Christ. I believe that God, in everything in this book, has revealed Himself in His entirety. I do not believe there is any character, any attribute, anything that the reason that God does or does not do something, I believe that every answer is in this book. I believe it is God's mind. I believe that when we read it and we get it, we have everything that God is, but the bottom line is God does not reveal it all to us.

We are in this life, and this life is a veil of tears. This life, we are going to face some struggles. Obviously, I said it before, you and I are not responsible for the bad things that happen in life. We are not responsible. I do not believe that Rex went home to be with the Lord because of any sin in his life. I do not believe that, and God knows his heart more than I do, but I just as a human being watching him, I just cannot believe that somebody would be in deep sin that would love the preaching of the Word of God like that. When people get into sin, they do not like the preaching of the Word of God.

We preach the Bible here. We build it on building a relationship. We are building on doing what is right. We are building on the foundational structure that God intended it to be. Let me tell you something: if you do not have a tune to love God and you do not have a tune for the things of God, I love you, but you are not going to appreciate what we have to say. It is like rubbing up against sandpaper. It is like, why would you take that abuse when you have one kind of lifestyle and you do one thing this way, and then you go to a place where they talk about what is right? If you are not in tune with doing what is right in your life and inclined to go in that direction, you are not going to be happy with it. That is why people do not come to church. That is why people

do not make God and the Word of God every part of their daily life. They have their own agenda, and they do not. I do not see that here.

I believe that we have a man that found the Word of God and enjoyed the Word of God. I believe we have something where God gave him what he needed, gave him the rest and his security in the Bible to a degree that it gave him everything that he was looking for in life. You can look at it a lot of different ways. You can look at it as the fact, "Well, what a tragedy that is. What a tragedy that is that a man finds the Word of God, gets excited about the Bible, really loves the Bible, finds a place where he can get everything he wants, then he dies." Well, I think it is just the opposite. What a tragedy would be if he died and never got that.

You see, we look through a glass darkly. I do not understand why God does those things. I understand why God, but I realize that God never does anything that hurts us. I am concerned about the boy. I am concerned about now that he will get swallowed up. But you know what? It is legitimate. I am human. I love the kid, and I see and I understand what he is going through. But I have to tell you this morning, God is bigger than all of that. I have to confess to you, as much as I know about the Bible and love the Bible and love God, I am just like you. I am a child, and today, in this and other things in our lives, we have to look through a glass darkly. I do not understand. I do not figure it out.

V. The Pilot's Story: God's Bigger Picture

There are times in your life and my life, but what a great lesson this is. There are times in your life and my life when you have to step back and you just have to accept what God has done, and you have to run to this verse and you say, "Lord, I look through a glass darkly. I do not understand." We are all going to be faced with that in life. This church is going to be faced with it. There are going to be more times that come where we lose somebody or something happens to somebody that we stand back as a body of believers and hold hands and pray and say, "God, I do not understand. I do not figure it out."

I am telling you, in this life, Paul says, "I was a child. I spake as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child." There comes a time right now in our lives where as smart as we are, as much as the Bible we know, whatever your relationship with God, we are still a child. Jesus said, "Except ye come to me as little children, ye have no part of me." You never grow up when it comes to God. You may mature, but the bottom line is that childlike faith of always believing Him and trusting Him is the key to your successful Christian life.

There are going to be times in your life when you see this and you see that, and it is very apparent what God is doing. But I am going to tell you something. There are some times just like this. There are going to be times in your life, and a lesson you need to learn, a verse that needs to become part of your daily maintenance in the Word of God, where you realize that in your life, in my life, there is going to be times when something happens. The Bible says that now we look through a glass darkly. We are just not going to understand it all. We are not going to see it. Little babies dying, people who seemingly do what they are supposed to be doing and trying to love God and do what is right, and they die.

I know even in Job's time, as we talked about before, that everybody always wants to blame God. When the guy ran in to tell Job that he lost everything, he just adds it in there, "that the fire from God." Everybody wants to give the angle that God is the problem, that God is not in control, that God did this. Well, I am telling you something. God has a bigger picture than we have, and God understands a lot of things better than we do.

I had a man one time that was a pilot, and he told me, "You know," he says, "I have learned more about my relationship with God through flying than anything else in life other than the Word of God." He told me the story that he had taken off one night, and he had a business appointment, and he was flying his own plane. He used to fly himself around, and he had a place to go, and he thought to himself, he had a straight course. He could get there, and he was flying along the way. A radio controller came on and told him to turn this degrees, and he thought to himself, "Well, what in the world?" So he had to follow the instructions. So he went down here, and he flew down here for like an hour, and then he told him to take another course, and he is thinking to himself, "What in the world? This is so ridiculous." So he took it, and when he finally landed and he finally got to his destination, it took him three more hours than it was supposed to take. It took him six, seven hundred miles out of his way, and he thought to himself, "I am going to be late for my meeting. I am going to do this." He was really upset, and he was really mad.

So he called the FAA. He called where it was, and he said, "Hey, look, I filed a flight plan. I do not understand. What exactly did this guy that you gave me, he ran me all around the place?" He said, "I do not understand that I am late and all the things that happened, and now I am going to miss my meeting." He says, "I am just a little irritated, and I do not understand why he took me all the way around here when I could have went straight there." The guy began to talk to him and tell him that there was a tremendous storm that would have ripped his little plane to shreds, and he was heading right into it. Where he thought that he was going, where he thought he was going to the best route, and in his own human mind, he sat down, he looked at a map, and he says, "I have to be here by then. I am going to start from here. If I take this course, I will be there. It is the shortest route." He had it all planned out in his life. He thought the best way to get there was that way, and that way it would have been his end and been his doom. Somebody that he never saw, somebody that he never met, somebody that was in a control tower miles away saw something that was foreboding and going to be his end and going to be his doom, and led him a long way around but got him there safely.

How picturesque that is of our lives sometimes. We think we are going to go this way. We have it all planned out, and God sees the impending disaster of that way and then brings us a harder route, brings us a longer route, brings us another way, brings us a place that we do not really want to go the way it is going. It is inconvenient to us, but the end result is we look through a glass darkly. God sees it in a clarity. Just like God, that radio controller brought that man around the long way but got him there safely. Sometimes God has to take us on the route of life around the storms that He sees that we cannot see because, let us face it, His radar screen is a lot bigger than ours. He sees things the way they really are. We see them as they only apply to us. In other words, He sees things clearly. We look through the glass darkly.

VI. The Promise of Knowing Fully

Now I rest in that. I thank God for that. I thank God for the fact that I have somebody looking out for me that in times like this, when I do not understand it, in times like this, when I look at the tragedies and the heartache and the things that we go through that seemingly never end, that we throw up our hands and we want to quit or we want to give up, or at the worst, we begin to doubt God is in what we are doing, or we begin to lose our faith in God. Come back to this verse and understand that right now we look through a glass darkly. We are like a little child, but oh, what a great verse.

Yes, for now we look through a glass darkly. Yes, now we are like a little child, and we speak as a child, and we ask God for stupid things. We understand as a child, we think stupid things. A little child is afraid of the dark when all he has to do is turn on the light. A little child says foolish things because it does not understand the big picture and the consequences of life. A little child thinks in ways that adults cannot even comprehend. They think things and they are afraid of things, but yet when you look at Christians, we are the exact same way. We fear the darkness because we do not turn on the light. We fear the things of life simply because we do not understand the way God understands, and right now, in the very best we have, we look through a glass darkly.

But oh, the best part of that verse says, "but then." Face to face, there is coming a time we are going to understand it. For me, that is everything. God says, "You know what? Do not worry about it right now. I know what I am doing. You do not have to understand everything that is going on. You just have to know right now that I am in charge, but you know what? Coming in time, I am going to let you in on it."

1 Corinthians 13:12

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

You know what that means? Nobody in this room knows more about themselves than you do. You know everything about you. I look at you, and I know who you are. I know what you are. I know how you think for the most part, same way with me. We know each other because of a relationship, but you know what the truth of the matter is, nobody really knows you better than you. There is not anything about you that you do not know. There may be some things you do not want to admit, and there may be some things you will not go public with or you would not want to see a national Esquire or the New York Times or whatever, but you know what, let us face it, nobody knows everything about you better than you do other than God.

You know what He is saying? He says, "Right now I look through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." You are going to know it all just like you know everything about you right now when the Lord comes back. God right now is doing something. God right now has got a plan, and sometimes He does not let us in on all of it. Sometimes He wants, He is working, and we know that all things work together for good. We know that God is not the author of confusion. We know that perfect love casteth out

fear. We know all those verses, and it brings us to the place where we just trust God, and we know God. Right now, even though we do not understand it all, and we look through a glass darkly, but then there is coming a time when face to face we are going to know everything that God is doing because we are going to be part of the final process.

There are a lot of things in life that I do not understand, a lot of things in life that I do not figure out, this being one of them. I look at it, and honestly, God knows my heart, honestly, I look at it, and I say to God, "Lord, in my mind, there is probably, I think there was a better way You could have done this." I mean, I have to be honest with You, Lord. You know what? When you come to the place in your relationship with God when you can talk, I am not doubting God, but you know what? God wants you to express what you are feeling. My goodness, you do it to everybody else. Your wife, do it to your husband. Husband, do it to the wives. Kids, do it to their parents. I mean, you do it to your boyfriend, why cannot you have the same liberty with God? Tell Him what you are feeling. You are not being disrespectful or you are not being angry at Him. You are just saying, "Lord, I am looking through a glass darkly. From my standpoint, You could have done this a different way and maybe accomplish whatever You are trying to accomplish." But you know what? God does it the way He wants to do it according to His will because He knows the bigger picture.

VII. God's Glory and Ruthie's Story

I do not know what is going on. I know this: I know the Bible says that we are vessels of honor, or we can be vessels of dishonor. There is no man on the face of this planet that does not give God the ultimate that God requires. You know what that is? God ultimately requires honor and glory and praise and worship. That is what He wants. When you and I get saved, that is what we are to do with our lives, our bodies, we are to glorify Him, and God gets glory out of us doing what the Word of God says.

But somebody thinks, "Well, I am unsaved, or I am a Christian, but I am not very plugged into God, and I am going to do my own thing, and I am not going to give honor and glory to God." No, you are wrong. God will get honor and glory out of your life no matter who you are. He talks about in the book of Romans, he talks about Pharaoh. He says, "For this same reason have I not raised you up, Pharaoh?" I am going to give you the opportunity to do what is right, and if Pharaoh would have stood up and said, "You know what? God is a great God. We have gods, but they are not very good gods. They are sitting like this God. God has revealed to me that the children of Israel, He has got a plan. You know what? We are going to let them go. We are going to pay their way. We are going to give them everything they want. We are not a Christian nation, but you know what? We are going to honor their God and send them on their way and give them everything they wanted." Why, they have been more written about him in history than any other man. But he could not. He just could not. We know the reasons why. But God took him in his denial and took him in his sin and took him in his arrogance against God, and the ultimate was God got the honor and glory out of his disobedience to God. God will do that. Or you can choose to be an honor of that or a vessel of honor and let God use it that way.

I do not understand. I know this: I know Rex understands it better than all of us right now. I know right now if he had the chance to change it all and come back, he would not because you know what? He is finally, he got joy and peace here. He loved the Word of God here. Let me tell you, the joy and peace he has got where he is at cannot compare to what we have here, and it is pretty good with this based on the same book, but he is with Him, man. He is with Him. He is with Him.

You know what about the boy? God loves him more than I do. It is not a thought. Come on. God. I love him. I worry about him. I pray for him. You know what? God loves him more than I love him. I cannot love him to the capacity that God loves him, and God is in his heart. God knows what he needs, and God, and I do not understand it all. I am looking through a glass darkly, but I do know this: I know that God has a purpose and God has a plan for it.

I do not know what is going to take place tomorrow. How many times have I seen people stand around and ask the question why, not wrongly? They look at it like I do. I have done it. I have stood around where somebody died that I just did not understand why. I mean, when a guy, somebody gets 80, 90 years old, and they just die of old age or complications and stuff, and you expect that. But I have known a lot of Christian young. I know a lot of Christian young men and young ladies that died long before they were supposed to, as far as medically is concerned.

I remember one little gal years ago, and I do not even know if any of you remember little Ruthie years ago. One of the sweetest girls you ever met in your life. I mean, I have never probably met a more conscious, godly girl than this little girl, and she, she just, she never got married, never had any children. She had a boyfriend, they were going to get married, but she had a brain tumor, and I will never forget they are, and she, and even in all of that, she had the, she had the almost unbelievable, the most unbelievable spirit. I would feel so, I mean, she was probably 18 or 19, maybe 20 years old at the max, and you know, she, she had a brain tumor, and they operated, opened up her brain, and they took the tumor out, and he patched her back up, and I remember going to see her and how, how, how she always uplifted me. Then they found another brain tumor, and they went back in and they operated on that and took that one out, and then she was back around, and she would come back to church and everything, but then they come, board come back that they found another one, and this one they could not operate on.

But I will never forget her funeral. She died. I was there when she died. Her mom, her mom did not go to church. Her mom and family did not care about God. They thought she was a fanatic. Everybody standing around, me included, and we were, it devastated our class, and we just sat there, and everybody was just, everybody asked the question why. I mean, I do not want anybody to die, but you know what? There are a lot of people out there that are a lot worthless that, that better than anything, that is how you think as a human being, and I did not write, but that is how you deal. But you know what? We looked through a glass darkly.

I never been in this funeral like hers. It was down south someplace. I do not even remember where it was. I will never forget what happened. One of the sweetest little gals I ever met in my life, loved the Lord, and it was a lot like it was today. It must have been about 200 people in that funeral. I did not know most of them. It was like 100 miles down someplace, and I get up, and I,

I had my text, my funeral text. It is honestly good that I got up there, and when I was walking up, just like I was here today, God says, "You know what? You are pretty agile, kid. I am going to change your text." He says, "Just wait till you get up there." When I got up there, and I looked out there, I just realized that that just was not what I needed to preach, and I just, I do not even, I do not remember where I started. I do not remember all that I said, but I know I preached salvation right down the line. I think I said, "You know what? There is a funeral." I do not remember how I started. I said, "There is a funeral text that everybody is used to that everybody is expecting me to preach today." I said, "Would you allow me not to do that? Would you allow me to preach the funeral that Ruthie would like to have me preach today?" How do you argue with that? Because she asked me to preach her funeral and asked me to put it on them. I thought I had it all down the way I wanted. It was so nice. It was. But no, no, no.

When I got, and boy, I will tell you what, when I got to the end of that thing, I worked them about 40 minutes, and I mean, I preached to them about the death, burial, resurrection of Christ, Ruthie's life. I mean, I put everything in there. I even had stories of Noah's ark, and I do not even know how they got in there. I went from Daniel's on the line, then to Noah's ark, to Joan of Arc. I had it all over there, man. I went from Genesis to Revelation in 40 minutes, and I am telling you what, I mean, I have never in my life put it together like that.

Here is the thing: when I got to the end, and this is how I was young then, I was not, I wanted to do what is right, but I always did not catch that. I was just like a young quarterback. I always did not get the place coming in from the coach. I had not figured out yet that I knew I was supposed to preach, but now I was coming down to the end. You do not give invitation to funerals. You are not supposed to, and I had not planned that. I thought, "Well, you know, you always do one of these things. You always say, 'Well, you know, there is somebody here, you know, after, you know, that wants to hear, you know, you always get out of it that way. You do it, but you really do not do it.'"

I came down through there, and I laid that thing out, and I got down to the end, and I said, "Well, I did not know what to do." Now we are in a funeral home, and there is a piano over here and an organ over here and all that. I said, "I just, I said, I just feel like I ought to give an invitation today." I saw some movement out of my side, and I looked over my side, and a woman got up out of the thing and went up and got on the organ. She opened up the thing and started playing "Just As I Am." I looked over to me, and she went, and boy, she is going to town. Now this woman looked like she could whip Barry with a stick out behind the place. I mean, she was not your dainty like the one we got, this lovely. This woman like, like she even, she had just, you know, she looked like she was probably world-class, you know, she was something, boy. I mean, she, she had been around town, and obviously saved and loved the Lord, but boy, what a rough life. I mean, nobody, she, I mean, when I saw her get on the thing, I knew nobody was going to stop us. She had it, man. And she got up there, boy, she flipped that thing up, she turned that key on, and she started playing "Just As I Am," and I thought to myself, "Lord, here it is. Here it is." I gave the invitation. Eight or nine people got saved that day in a funeral. Just came down. Most important of all was the one person that Ruthie wanted more than anybody else to get saved, that was her mother.

Now you see, there is a case where God lets you see a little peek of it. We looked through a glass darkly. I did not understand what God was doing that day. When it was all said and done, I understand that Ruthie, someplace in her relationship with God, I do not know where, she never told me, she has never been written down. I just know it is true because of what the Bible says. At some place, she said to God in some form or fashion, she said this, "Lord, I want my mama saved. I do not want her to go to hell. My whole family is unsaved, Lord, and Lord, I am saved, and I am on my way to heaven, and I am just telling you, Lord, if You can get more honor and glory out of my death to save my mom and my family than my life, if that is what it will take, then You do that." Now you say, "Bob, did you know?" I am telling you, I do not know how she did it. I do not know how she said it. I just know Ruthie, and I know the circumstances, and I know what happened, and I know someplace in her life that conversation transpired between her and God, and God saved her mama and a lot of her friends that day many, many, many, many years ago.

VIII. Trusting God's Plan

Now I do not understand this. We look through a glass darkly, but then face to face, someday I will. Maybe we will get a piece of it sometime this next week or down in months to go. Sometimes you do things like that, and you distrust God, and then God shows you some things. Sometimes He does not. But I know this, whether He does or whether He does not, I know this today: God is in charge. God is in charge, and there is something that God is going to get out of Rex's life that is going to change somebody's life. You know what? Maybe we will never see it. Maybe we will never hear about it. But I know this: the Bible promises that the Word of God will not return void. It will accomplish the thing wherewith God sent it, and God will use it tomorrow morning, tomorrow afternoon, the guy that preaches the funeral, or what I do with the graveside, or what Rex has done in his life. Someplace along the line, I do not know. I do not know how it is going to happen. I just do know this: right now we look through the glass darkly, but then face to face, God is going to get honor and glory to this because Rex, in some place in his life, I do not know where, I do not know if he knew it exactly, I do not know if he said it exactly, I do not know if it is just in his heart with God, but someplace along the line, God and Rex got together and come to the place where he was satisfied and happy with the Word of God. From that point on, God says, "Okay, buddy, you like being with Me? You like hanging out with Me? You like what you hear about Me? Come on, I will show you even more. I put you in a good church. I know when you are going to come home to be with Me. I wanted you to get all the little details worked out, and I wanted you to enjoy it. Now I am going to really show you what it is all about." And God took him home. That is where it is at.

Do I understand all of that? No. I look through a glass darkly, but someday face to face, I will know even as also I am known, and I will understand it. That is where we are at. So what do we do? We just pray that God has His own way in this. I have no more answers for you now than when Steve stood up here and said, "I do not understand why this happened." I do not either. I probably would have done it a different way, but that is just me. God understands the big picture. He knows what needs to be done, and the bottom line is Rex was His. He was not ours. God just lent him to us for a while, a short while. Wished we could have had him longer, but I thank God

we had him. I thank God that this church, you people, the preaching of the Word of God, cared enough that when they walked through that door that you loved them, that you shook their hand, that every week they knew that this was a church that cared about him, and every week he knew he was going to get something from the Word of God that was going to challenge his heart and bring him a little closer to God. To me, that is all the comfort in the world because that is our job. That is our only job, and God will do the rest.

Right now, let us rest in this fact, and every one of us can do this, especially Steve, he is the one that brought him. But what does that tell you? How many other people are out there that need to be brought because they need what Rex needed? We can rest in this one thing in the case of Rex Lee, that everybody in this church did what they were supposed to do in loving him. Steve did what he was supposed to do in bringing him. I did what I was supposed to do in preaching him, and you did what you were supposed to do in loving him. That is what a church is all about. So in that, we take our comfort today. We miss him. It is not something that we are done today. Next week, it will be all forgotten. I will miss him for a long time. I do not know what God is going to do with all this situation yet, but I trust that God knows what He is doing. Me, I look through a glass darkly, but I know that in time God will show us, and we will just trust Him in that.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and Lord, we love You so much. Father, I just ask You today that You will comfort our hearts, that You will let us know as a church that we did what was right here, and there may be time down the line we blow it, but in this case, I just cannot believe that this church and the men and women in this church did not help prepare him to meet You, and that is our job. Lord, comfort our grief today. Put Your arms around us as a small little church struggling to get our head above water and just to reach people, and I know we will. It comes in time, but Lord, I just pray that You will help us in all that we do. Thank You, Father, for Steve and his family that he cared enough to bring him. Thank You, Father, that the men and women in this church care enough to invite people and to bring them. Thank You, Father, for this church who loves people genuinely without any conditions and cares because of what God has done in our life. Now, Lord, we will just thank You and praise You for all that You do.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. We are going to be finished in a moment. I am not going to embarrass anybody. Our heads are bowed and our eyes are closed, but I am going to close in prayer here in just a second. I wonder today if there is a man or a woman here that you do not know the Lord as your own personal Savior. You have never, never, never put your faith and trust in the One who died for you on Calvary's cross, and if you die right now today, you do not know for sure that you go to heaven. With your head bowed and closed, and nobody will embarrass you, I would just like to pray for you. Would you slip up your hand and say, "Bob, I am not sure if I died right now I would go to heaven. Here is my hand." Anybody? God bless you, son. We will put it back down. Thank you, buddy. Thank you. Anybody else? Anybody else? Anybody else? We are just going to wait a minute before we pray.

Now let me just ask you this, buddy, would you look at me just for a second here, and every head bowed? I love you. God loves you. Do you allow one of my men to take you back in one of the rooms and open up the Word of God to show you how to be saved today? If you let somebody do

that with you, God bless you. Okay, Jimmy, take him back here. Just go with Jimmy right here, and he will take you back here. He will show you how you can know for sure to be saved. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Well, we look through a glass darkly, but then. I wondered if Rex would not allow me this, and please, I am not a prophet, but I am asking this. I am just asking myself this, and you know, hear me out. I wonder if I would have just went ahead with my standard thing today if that boy would have got saved. I do not know. Maybe he would have. I am not saying that Rex died so this kid could get saved. I am not saying that. I am just saying, you know what? There are a lot of things God is going to do that we do not understand. We just allow God to be God, and I think it started this morning. I do not think any of us, you know what? I just did not want, and I do not know why I am feeling what I felt this morning. Steve got me into this mode when he came out there, and then God used him to get me here. But you know what? I guess what I am trying to say is this: I do not want us to just let Rex's passing from our church and our lives just be a matter that we all forget six months from now. Let it be an object lesson, and God punctuated the message this morning by a young man getting saved. Let us just take it from there and see what God is going to do. But take this with you: right now we are children, and right now we look through a glass darkly. We do not always see it all. Understand that. But there is coming a time we are going to see it face to face, and we are going to understand it all just like we understand everything about ourselves right now. Thank You, Father, for all that You do. Thank You for this young man even now that Jimmy is opening up the Word of God and showing him how to be saved. Thank You, Father, for all that You do. Lord, we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.