

I. Introduction to the Judgment Seat of Christ

That's what we have been doing, and we have been studying the Judgment Seat of Christ. In the course of what we are going to do, we are going to look at issues that are absolutely crucial for you as a child of God. These are things that you need to know first, things that you need to understand, how they really apply, and how they lay out in your life. We will then disperse that with looking at character studies in the Bible: what kind of people in the Bible, how they built a relationship, and all of that is in the Word of God to show you some incredible things.

We started a couple of weeks ago, and I talked to you about Job 26. I told you when we started to study that the questions in the Bible are an issue; they have always been an issue for me. As I studied the Bible years ago, I knew that the Bible was God's Word. I knew it wasn't any accident that it is written the way that it is written. It wasn't an idea where man just put it together and it contains the Word of God, but it's written by man. No, no, no. It is the absolute perfect Word of God. When you have a King James 1611 Authorized Version Bible, you have the absolute perfectly inspired Word of God. You have a book that has everything in it that God wants you to have. That is why we sing the song, "Get a new look from the old book," because that book has been changing people's perspective on life for a long time. So when you come to the Bible, you have to realize that everything is in there for a reason and for a purpose. The questions in there are just as important because we see that if God asks some questions, somebody is going to have to come up with the answers.

II. The Questions for the Unsaved

I told you how, in the course of when I began to see this—this has been 20 years ago—I began to go through the Bible and look at all the questions in the Bible. I began to put them into categories, and I came to this conclusion: I believe that at the Great White Throne Judgment, every unsaved man and woman is going to stand there before God and have to give an account. I believe he is going to give an account by God asking him questions that he cannot answer.

I believe that an unsaved man or woman has spent all of their life trying to get out from under the authority of the Word of God. They have spent all of their lives trying to build their lives, and as Frank Sinatra sang, "Do it my way," they put together the whole concept that life is what they want it to be. Our whole society is geared that way, and of course, the world is headed that way. I believe that in the Bible, there is a set of questions for every man, for every woman, no matter what course you took in life, that an unsaved man will stand there. You have to remember now that at the Great White Throne Judgment, you are going to be put on trial to declare your righteousness against God's righteousness. You are going to have to show God why you should go to heaven without the blood of Christ. That sounds really stupid to say, but that is what it is going to be. You are going to have to try to convince God why God should allow you to go to heaven without the death of His Son being applied to your sins. That is an impossible task. But

God is going to ask that man, that woman, some questions, and they are going to have to come up with some answers.

III. The Questions for the Saved

Luckily, because we are saved here—and I look around, I see most of us, I know probably we all are saved—all of us here today are saved. We know that there has been a time in our life when we put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that that judgment is not affecting us. We do not ever have to worry about the Great White Throne Judgment from the aspect of going there and being judged.

As I told you when we started our study, there are seven judgments in the Bible. Three of those judgments have to do with you as a Christian. We talked about how God judged you as a sinner on Calvary's cross when you got saved. Hence, no White Throne Judgment for you; it is taken care of. While you are on this earth, God judges you as a son. We talked about the chastising hand of God in Hebrews 5 and other places. Then we talked about how God is going to judge us as a servant. That is the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is coming a day when you and I, as believers, will have to stand before God, and we will have to answer some questions. God is going to ask us some questions along the lines of our service.

As I have said before, Job 26, as we begin to look at this, I told you, the only people I know that can answer these questions are born-again Christians in the church age. I believe with all of my heart that someday these are the questions that God is going to ask us. We looked at some of them already.

➤ How hast thou helped him that is without power?

We looked at that as God asking the question, "What have you done for unsaved people?" Unsaved people are powerless. They do not have any way of overcoming anything in their life. They are powerless. So we asked the first question:

How hast thou helped him that is without power?

➤ How savest thou the arm that hath no strength?

We talked about that being a young Christian, somebody who is saved. Notice it is an arm; they are part of the body. There are many, many references in the Bible to Christ being God's right hand and all of those things, how God teaches your hands to war and makes your arms strong, that a bow of steel is breaking against them. All of that in the Bible is symbolic and deals with the fact that this is somebody who is part of Christ's body, but he has no strength. He is a young Christian. Of course, we talked about the fact that once you get saved, you get power. But as you grow in the Lord, you translate that power into strength. Strength is power guided in the right direction.

How savest thou the arm that hath no strength?

➤ How hast thou counseled him that hath no wisdom?

We talked about counsel last week. We talked about what it means to counsel somebody with the Word of God. How do you deal with people? What does it mean in the Bible's definition of being a counselor? As we saw last week, every born-again Christian ought to be a Christian counselor, not in the sense of having a PhD and a little frame on your wall talking about the fact that you do psychoanalysis and therapy, psychotherapy and all that stuff. I learned a long time ago that if you are going to be a Christian, you do not ever get a degree in psychology. Do not get one in psychology. Do not get one in psychiatry. Do not get one in psychotherapy. Get one in psychoceramics. That is the one you want as a Christian: psychoceramics. Because you are going to deal with a lot of crackpots in Christianity, and that is what you have to have a degree in psychoceramics. Think about it for a while. It will hit you about three o'clock this afternoon. You will be calling me on the phone wanting to know where I got that, but I am not going to tell you.

How hast thou counseled him that hath no wisdom?

IV. The Fourth Question: Declaring the Truth

Now, we are going to look at the rest of them today. He says this:

How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? to whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We ask You, Father, today to give us wisdom and insight into all the things that we have in Your Word to look at. Help us, Father, to really understand how that someday we are going to stand before God, and to put all this together, that we may have the answers, Father, to this day. Thank You, Father, for all that You do for us now. We pray, Father, You will bless us, bless those ones that are home ill today, and Father, bless those ones that just did not want to come today, and help them, Father, to see in their own lives, Lord, what they need to do. We will thank and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now, the next question I want to talk about here is, "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" I guess if there is anything that I have a pet peeve with in my life, as far as a Christian, a preacher, and all those things, I guess it is this. I am a very laid-back guy. If you back me into a corner, yes, I will bite you. But the bottom line is, I am very easy to get along with, and I just take life in stride. I see things, people say things about me, to me, and all that. I just take it in stride. It is one of those things where I understand that is just the way life is. There is not much in life that infuriates me. But I will tell you one thing that does infuriate me. The thing that just gets me going on it, and I could go all day, all night, and take all day tomorrow, and the rest of your week, is to talk about people who have the truth and do not preach it. That bothers me more than anything else in this whole wide world.

I guess I understand the length that God went to give us the truth. I also understand the length that the devil went to change the truth. When we started this study, I told you the first two questions you find in the Bible. The first question is God asking Adam, "Adam, where art thou?" when God knew exactly where he was. The second question was Satan asking Adam and Eve, "Did God really mean what He said?" The idea of truth is the one thing the devil has to get

around, because truth will always stand as truth, and there is no defense against the truth. The truth will always be the truth no matter what it is. So what Satan does is he creates illusions. He creates illusions that things that are not true are true. He plays on human nature.

I was talking to Steve Bracken before I went. Steve had to go to a large Baptist church last week, and I will not mention the name. I am past that point in my life. I used to call them out, but I do not do it anymore. But he went to a baby dedication at a large church here and talked about how it was just a disaster. I told him, "The last time I heard that guy preach was on television." I did not tell him I got so mad when I heard it that I just... It does not do for me to listen to that kind of stuff. But the last time I heard that guy preach, I heard him preach, and it was right around Christmastime, and he was preaching how to know that Christ was born on December 25th, and that is the real birthday. He went to the absolute extreme. I thought to myself, "There are people out there that think I am nuts because I believe that in 1947, aliens landed at Roswell." They listen to this guy, and they think, "That's the truth." I am telling you, you have the truth. You do not have to go to all that stuff and all that junk out there to try to prove something. The truth will always be the truth. It is one of those things where the Bible says, when we stand before God, He is going to ask the question, "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?"

Now, that is one thing about me. You come here to hear me preach, and you count yourself a member of this church. We do not have anybody coming down and joining the church. I figure if you want to come, you come. If you do not want to come, you do not come. I am not into that. I think that I am not into a lot of things that are traditionalized. I am into one thing, and that is this book. I figure if you join the book, that will take care of itself. Do not join me. Do not join this church. We do not have an invitation where you come down and join this church, or a handshake and luau where we all... The bottom line is this: you want to come, come. You do not want to come, do not come. I am going to preach the book every week.

That is what I like about me. I like a lot of things about me, but that is one of the main things I like about me. My greatest characteristic is this: you will either love me or you will hate me. There is no middle ground. You will love me to death or you will hate me to death. There are people in this town right now who love to hate me. But the bottom line is this: that is where we are at. You either love me or you will hate me.

I am not comparing myself to the Word of God, but the greatest characteristic about the Word of God is that you either love it or you will hate it. I think I am that way because of the time that I spent in the book and what the book did for me, not that I am comparing myself to the Word of God. But I am telling you this: you will either love God or you will hate God.

I know in our society, you are given the illusion that you can somehow have a halfway relationship with God. I know that is true. I know a lot of people believe that. I know that that is permeating our society in Christianity. There are a lot of illusionary things out there that the devil has put up with bright lights and fanfare to blind God's people into thinking. But that, in essence, is not true. Your relationship with God is like your relationship with the Word of God. As far as God is concerned, you either love Him or you hate Him. There is no halfway where, "Well, yeah, I..." You may look at it that way, but God does not look at it that way.

We were back last week with the old ant farm story. It does not matter what you think or what you do. The only thing that really matters is what the One who made it all and does it all thinks. In our minds, we think—how many times I have had people say this—"Well, I am really not in fellowship with God, but I am really not out of fellowship with God either. I am just kind of somewhere in limbo. I am just somewhere in between." That "in between" only exists in your mind. There is no "in between" for a child of God. Your job as a Christian, we talked about it when we started the Judgment Seat of Christ, the day you get saved, you lay a foundation. You build upon that foundation: gold, silver, precious stones. It is not half gold, a little bit of silver. It is either one, two, three, or it is wood, hay, or stubble. It is not a halfway thing where, "Well, I got a little gold, I got a little hay, I got a little stubble." Yes, you do, but that is not what we are talking about. Your pants look like wood, your hair looks like hay, and you have stubble. (I am picking on him because I love him.) Who was that guy you dated? What was that guy's name? George Washington? George Washington, yeah. Remember that? Anyway, there is no halfway ground. It is either everything or it is nothing.

I have told you this before, and I will give it to you again: the key to loving God is your attitude of heart. When I say that you either love Him or you hate Him, I do not mean that you do not do things that are wrong. We all do things that are wrong. The real key is, "How do you feel about it when you do something wrong?" That is the key. I am not going to stand up here and be such a fool to tell you that you are not going to do something wrong tomorrow. You will do it wrong today. We all will. But the real issue is, "How do you feel about it when it happens?" Do you anticipate sinning in your life with anguish? I do. Do you anticipate tomorrow, next week, "I do not want to go here because when I go here, I have to deal with this, and that always messes me up a little bit"? That is the right attitude. It is just this blundering through time in life where you really do not give a flip what happens or what you do, and the consequences between you and God are irrelevant. That is the problem. I do not ever begrudge anybody for sinning. We all sin. I begrudge God's people for sinning and just laughing at it and going on with life. When you transgress God's law, it ought to affect you. I am not saying that you are not going to. We are. I am just saying, "How do you feel about it when you do?" Because the relationship with God is based on your attitude.

I look at David's life, and David has always been a favorite of mine. I have studied his life, and he is one of the unique guys in the Bible. If you go through his life and you see all the things that he did wrong—we think about Uriah the Hittite and Bathsheba, and that is where we plant most of his sin. But when you go through his life, he did some really dumb things. There were times that he was just flat out out of whack. But I am going to tell you one characteristic about David, and I have said this before: I find that even when David is way out of fellowship with God, he still has an understanding of God's principles that you do not find very often. I always say it this way: he is closer to God out of fellowship than most of God's people are when they are in fellowship. He is a unique individual. Why? Because he had an attitude with the Word of God. It did not start when he got to be king. It started way before he was king, when he was a little shepherd boy out there all by himself, plucking that little harp, singing psalms and songs to God.

Everybody in your Christian life has that kind of experience. I am not saying you go wrap yourself in a towel and get you a harp and sit out in the backyard, but what I am saying is this: there is a time in your life when you are just like that. It is you and God, and the time is tender. I cannot think of anything more tender than you just being out someplace where it is just you and God, and the total time you sing, and you are not listening to the radio, you are not doing this, you are not listening to CDs, you are not listening to that. You are just sitting there and you are entertaining God the best way you can. I cannot think of a better tender time than that. Everybody ought to have that time.

David's problem was that he grew up, and he lost that to a degree, but he never really lost it. Because truth impacts you. That is why I am such a stickler on the truth. Truth will change your life, and truth, what it will do, it will change you. Everybody says, "Well, truth, truth will make you free," and "truth is a great thing." Let me tell you what truth will do for everyone: it will ruin you. Truth will ruin you because you will never be able to buy one of the illusions again once you get the truth. You never will. It is like having a real \$20 bill and a counterfeit. Once you get the real money and it spends, you will never want to print the counterfeit again. Why? Because nobody is going to buy it. It is the same way with the Word of God and truth. Once you get truth, and once truth impacts your life, you are never satisfied with the illusions of life again. You laugh at it. You see it. The world becomes a comedy. The world becomes a stage where the news and the people and all the things around you, you just go away and shake your head and laugh because it is absolutely so ridiculous.

I have started another collection. I am collecting now in an obituary column the poems that people put in. I am. I have four or five of them already. I figure in a year's time I will have enough information and enough stuff to preach a great message on dead people and where they go. Because I tell you what, if you want entertainment, just get to the obituary, man, and read what people write about people who died and where they are at. It is the greatest thing in the world. "When you stand by my grave, don't feel bad. Feel the wind. That's me. See the leaves fall? I'm in the leaves. See the rain fall and brighten the green in the grass? I'm in the rain. That dog that just bit the calf of your leg? That was me, too. I'm mad at you because..." I mean, it is incredible. People write those things because it makes them feel good. But that is not truth.

The truth is just like loving God or hating Him. The truth is heaven or hell. You see how clean God is? What I like about God, what I like about the Word of God, is there is no middle ground with it. I do not have to wonder where I am at. Why do some of God's people wonder where they are at with God today? Because they want to wonder. They are wondering because they are wandering. I do not have to wonder. I know exactly where I am at once you have the truth. When you do not have the truth or you do not believe the truth, then you get into the illusion. "Well, yes, Brother Bob, I am saved, but I am just not a very good Christian. I am not really... I mean, I really love God. I really do. I really believe in God, and I know that He is the Man upstairs. I really believe in God and all that stuff, but I just do not do what I am supposed to do." No, no. It does not work that way. Jesus said, "You are with Me or you are against Me." All the way back in the beginning of Genesis, it started. It says, "There was light and there was darkness." And the

light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. God is so simple. Truth is so simple. Truth makes you one way or the other. There is no middle ground with it.

V. Truth and the Church: A Theocracy vs. Politics

He says, "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" What happens when you do not have truth that guides you in your church? You turn into a little government. You do. When you forsake truth, you turn into a government. Have you ever noticed that is what happened to Israel? What God wanted for Israel was a theocracy. What is a theocracy? A theocracy is God in charge. God is King. He is President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Army, Secretary of the Marine Corps. He is everything. When God made the nation of Israel, He wanted to be their God and a theocracy where He was their King. He says, "I will give you a king that will relate directly to Me, that that king will be just like Me, that this thing will never get political." That is what God wanted.

What did the nation of Israel want in 1 Samuel 8? They said, "We do not want that. We want to be like all the other nations. We want a king. We love You. Oh, we are going to make the sacrifices. Oh, and we are going to keep the law. But the bottom line is, we do not want You as King, God. We want to be like all the other nations." That is what God's people say today. "Oh, I love You, God. Oh, yeah, You are great. But I do not want You King of my life. I want to be like all the other people in the world." So what happens? The church then brings all the world in. You see it in their music. You see it in their preaching. You see it in their lifestyles. You see it in the things that they enjoy doing. You see that in this whole big thing called an illusion; we think that it is still biblical Christianity when the Bible and God walked out the door a long time ago.

The nation of Israel, God said to them, "I want to be your King, and I am going to give you a king after My own heart. That will be the greatest king you ever had. He and I are just like that. As long as he is king, you are not going to have any internal strife whatsoever." When David was king, there was not. David fought. David was not allowed to build the temple because David had to subdue all the rest of the nations out there. He had to go to war, and he had to go fight. But he won every victory. Why? Because God was his Secretary of Defense. God was his everything. God was King. So the nation of Israel never lost a battle under David. They were the greatest nation the world has ever seen because they had a theocracy and a king. They had a man that was over that nation that was in direct relationship with God. As long as that happened, they were politically free. No politics. You study David's length of reign, you do not find one set of politics coming in other than when he gets messed up a little bit later on after Bathsheba, and he has some problem with his own boy Absalom. But the bottom line is, as far as the whole sphere of the nation, those were personal problems. I am talking about on a national level. He has one mess that he has to deal with politically. He is gone. Solomon comes on. What happens? The whole thing becomes political. The two boys of Solomon, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and all the "Boam" boys, they split the kingdom. It becomes political. Now they are not fighting other nations. Who are they fighting now? They are fighting the ten northern tribes, the two southern tribes. They are fighting among themselves. What God intended to be a cohesive organization to bring the world

to see God's glory under a king after God's own heart is now ceasing to get the job done because it has become political.

Now, let us erase all that off the board. Put a New Testament light. We do not have a nation today. We have churches. God wants to be King of this church. God says, "I am going to give you a pastor, a David-king after My own heart." As long as that is the way it is, and a man stays in the book and operates by the book and understands the book and understands the truth and stands up for what God says, there will be no politics. When do the politics come in? When we do not have the truth anymore. So we have to have something else we sell. We have to bring in this. We have to bring in that. We have to add this. We have to do here. We have to step out into the world. When we do that, and you stop being the king, the man that God wanted you to be, and you start going into the political world, your church becomes political. Then you get a lot of little Jeroboams and Rehoboams running around. You do. You get a lot of little Jeroboams and Rehoboams running around, and all they do, then you get the Ahabs and you get the Asas. Go through the list of kings. Do it for me. When you get to that place, when they split that kingdom in 1 Kings, and then you take the rest of the kings, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, I promise you. Look at the kings over Israel. In your mind, if you have been saved a short period of time, like 20 years or something like that, I promise you if you just think back, you will remember in your mind men and women and the churches that you have been in with all the political shenanigans that mimicked those kings. Because human nature is always human nature, and the bottom line is they did it to Israel, and the same thing happened in the church when the church lost the truth. When Israel lost the truth, David had one thing going for him that nobody else had: he had the Word of God. When the Word of God went, the politics came in. In the New Testament church, when the Word of God goes, the politics come in. When the politics come in, you do not need the Bible anymore because now you are operating under illusion.

What do you have to do now? You have to step into the grandstand of being big and successful and powerful and doing everything that goes on in life. You have to keep up with the Joneses in the Christian world. When there is some guy around the country that gets 25,000 people coming on Sunday school, let me tell you something, now we are motivated by success. Forget the idea of "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" No, no, we have to have results because we want to be nationally known as a gigantic work of God. So when so-and-so over here in California, up here in this place, when he has 25,000 people showing up on Sunday, all the preachers get on the bus, drive out there, and find out what he is doing because we want to bring it back. We want to run 25,000 too. "Tell me about your programs. What are you doing? What are you doing this? Why are you doing this? How are you having it?" It does not matter that they are having dancing girls in the aisle. It does not matter that they are doing all kinds of stuff that have nothing to do with the Bible. It does not matter because now that you have stepped outside the truth, you have an image to maintain. You are going to maintain that image as hard as you can, as much as you can, and with that image, you get lifted up and you get held up to all the Christian world. "This guy is the greatest pastor and the greatest church in the world."

Have you ever wondered why a man—you know what it is going to cost Bush to become president again? It is going to cost him over a hundred million dollars. If he wins, it is going to

cost... He has already raised almost a hundred million dollars. He has got another year to go. He is probably going to raise, they are saying, \$200 million. That is a lot of Arthur Bryant's barbecue for just having people come and vote for you. \$200 million. Hear me now, \$200 million. He is going to spend \$200 million to get a job that only pays \$200,000 a year. Is there something wrong with me that you are not responding to that, or do you think that is okay? A governor of Missouri pays \$125,000, \$150,000 a year or something like that. The last mayoral guy that won the thing spent over \$30 million to get a job that pays \$125,000 a year. Is there something wrong with that, or is that just me? Is it hot in here, or is that just you? Is there something wrong with that? Why? Why? Why would you do that? Why would I spend more money, a lot more money, a hundred times more money than I am going to make for a job?

It is like this: you go to your boss tomorrow and you say, "I would really like to have Joe's supervisor job." "Well, why would you like to have it?" "Well, it is more money. I mean, I get paid \$12 an hour. Joe is making \$20 an hour. So I figured it out, and \$20 an hour, that is just a little shy of \$50,000 a year. I will tell you what, I would really like to have that job." "Well, we will think about it." "Well, I will tell you what I will do. You let me have that job, I will give you a million dollars. I will tell you what, bring me up 20 bucks every morning, and I will give you a dollar back. That is fair, is not it?" There is nobody, you are not even considering it. I can see it in your face. You are not even thinking about it. You are thinking it is so stupid. It is just as stupid for somebody, but why do they do that? Because of the power. Power is an incredible thing. Power elevates you. Men want to be looked at. Why do they want to be president? Because when you are president, you are the most honest and good, you are the most powerful man in the world. No questions asked. Mess with this country? One call, push the button. What happened? Cuba is no more. As we speak, gone. Power. Japan? Two of them. Three days apart, let them have it. Two bombs. Boom, gone. Power. You are the most powerful man. After you are done and you are no more president, everybody wants the past most powerful man in the world to come and talk to them and just touch him. "I just want to be next to the most powerful man in the world." Everybody likes that.

Do you think preachers do not have the same problem? I promise you they do. Where the President of the United States picks up a phone and drops atom bombs on countries and obliterates them, big-time preachers pick up the phone and have their henchmen go out and whack somebody that they do not like. Or they say, "Yes, we are going to build a \$30 million addition." Click. "Yes, we are going to have the dancing girls here on Tuesday." "Yes, we are going to have, yes, we are going to make this," and all the world wonders. I am telling you, none of that has anything to do with truth. Truth is black and white. Truth is, you either love God or you hate Him.

I like the story of Ahab and Jezebel. I think they are such a... Ahab is a typical big-time preacher. He is like Saul. They are both sterling examples of the 20th-century modern-day Baptist preachers. Incredible. They are both the same. They want to have an illusion of loving God, an illusion of doing things, but they are always stepping outside the boundaries to do their own thing because the bottom line is they do not care about truth. They are using God to fulfill their own agenda. But God always sticks a little guy right in your thigh like a thorn. For Saul, it was

David. For Ahab, it was Micaiah. It is an incredible thing. The big guys always blamed when their kingdoms began to crumble. They always blamed a little guy. But the truth of the matter is, they were always the problem.

Ahab is the most wicked king Israel ever had, and he is in politics. He is politically bad with Jezebel. They are just having a great time running the kingdom and doing everything that they want to do. They have got the whole nation of Israel under their thumb. But under their thumb means that the whole nation is crumbling and falling apart. God gave him this little thorn in the flesh called Micaiah. One day there in 1 Kings 22, you come down through the story, Ahab says, "Is there any prophets left here that can tell me what God wants me to do next?" The guy says, "Yes, sir, there is Micaiah." He says, "Micaiah, I hate him. Why? Because he says no good thing concerning me." So they call Micaiah. Micaiah comes in. You know what Micaiah says? My favorite verse in the Bible.

1 Kings 22:14

And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.

In fact, years and years and years ago when I started to preach, I knew I had to preach the truth. I knew there was a lot of pressure. So I put it right on the front of my Bible right there. That is 1 Kings 22:14. Because I want to look at that thing every time before I get up to preach or while I am preaching. Whenever I am tempted to compromise or sway or do this or that, I just flip back there and look at that thing. That verse says, "Greatest verse in the Bible for a preacher." It says, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." That is Micaiah. For him, there was no issue. It was God's truth. There is never an illusion when it comes to God's truth. There is only illusion, there is only confusion when God's truth is gone, and everybody puts it together, and everybody is doing their own thing.

VI. The Consequences of Losing Truth (Hosea 4)

Now let me show you what transpired. I am going to show you where we are at today, and I am going to show you by showing you where they are at. Come over to Hosea 4. Here it comes. The parallels between the nation of Israel and the body of Christ are incredible. God wanted the same for both. They both had a mission. God gave both of them leaders. God commanded their leaders to stay in the Word of God to be an example for the people. As long as the leader preached the truth, stayed in the truth, there would be no politics in any organization, whether it is the New Testament Church or the Old Testament Nation of Israel. When the leaders departed from the truth, got out of the Word of God, left the Word of God, and brought everything else in, truth went out the window. Politics came in. Now it is not a theocracy anymore. The church is not a theocracy anymore. No, no, no. It is run by a bunch of little Mussolinis and Adolf Hitlers running around to have their own little third world countries in these big megachurches, and they are in charge. The pastor, he just comes and goes. They allow him to come and go. He comes and goes and he preaches and he leaves. He does not get into the outside things. He does not deal with people's problems. He has people to do that. He does not get into the depth of what is going on. He is a figurehead. He is a Zedekiah. He is a man that stands up there that has no power, no

authority, and you might as well just put a tape on when he is not there and play it because that is the same effect. He is not really in charge. Let me show you how this thing happened.

Hosea 4:1-6

Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

That is not Old Testament. That is the modern 21st-century Bible-believing Baptist Church in America today. God says, "I have a controversy." Have you ever noticed who the controversy is with? It is not with the unsaved people. The whole Christian world wants you to believe that what is wrong with America and what is wrong with the world are the gays. Now, I am not pro-gay, nor am I pro-lesbian, nor am I pro-any of that stuff, but I am going to tell you right now, that is not the problem. Baptist preachers think that gays just fell off the turnip truck 30 years ago. They have been around forever. I can take you back in the Old Testament, and I can show you that in certain parts out there when Israel was in a bad way, they had a house of prostitution up here. If that was your fancy, they had children in a big building over here that they gave birth to through religious worship, if that was your fancy. Then they had, for the really broad-minded, open adults, they had animals over here, and you could have all three, one, two, three, take your pick. It is in your Bible. It was run by the religious leaders of Israel. The problem has not ever been those people. They have always been around. The problem in America is not the Democrats or the Republicans. They have always been. There is always some political format in this world someplace. The problem is not Ben Lautner, who says, "I do not like either one of them," but that is not the problem. Quit blaming them for the problem. The problem today is the same problem that Israel had. I have showed you the comparisons. You cannot miss it now.

The controversy God has here, let me read it to you. Look at Hosea 4:1: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, for the Lord hath a controversy with all the gays." I read it wrong. "With all the lesbians, with all the drunkards, with all the crack cookers, with all the meth labs, with all..." No, no, no, no, no. His controversy is with His people in the land. You would think it would be all the sin that we have. Sin has always been, and sin is on one side, truth is on the

other side. Those two have always been going. Do not get any illusion. It is not the fact that they have all merged together now. The problem is there is sin, and there is truth, there is right, there is wrong, and you cannot put them together. What this world has done has not been to put them together. It just got rid of one. You would think the Christian New Testament church would get rid of sin, would not you? Wrong assumption. They kept the sin, got rid of the truth. You would think that Israel, God's chosen people, who God did everything in the world for, much like us, you would think that when it came to a decision, they would throw out the ungodliness and keep the truth. They did the same thing we did, or we did the same thing they did. They threw out the truth, kept the ungodliness.

Just read on here. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land." Why?

1. Because there is no truth.

Well, there was. Moses got it on Mount Sinai. But this time, the whole law is written down. They got the first five books of the Bible. There was truth! Where is it now? What happened to it? In 1920, 1930, Albert Einstein came up with the idea of the theory of relativity. The theory of relativity, very simply stated, boiled down with all the sugar and molasses out of it, is simply this: nothing is absolute in this world. There is no truth. Everything is relative. In other words, there is no truth. There is no single truth in this universe. Everything is relative on something else. In other words, what it comes down to is, make it up whatever you want, because there is no absolute truth. When he came up with that in 1920 and 1930, and he wrote a book on it, when he came up in that day, he shocked the scientific world. Everybody in the scientific world thought, "What a great statement that is! He is so right. He is so true. That is the answer we have been looking for, that you cannot know nothing for sure." All the Christians stood up and said, "That is heresy! We have a Bible!" In 1960, 1970, the Bible college was standing up, telling their young college students, those young preachers out there, people going to study for the ministry, the next five, six, seven, eight generations of God's people, when you shipped them off to Bible college, they were told the same thing that Einstein said in 1930. He said, "There is no absolute truth. You cannot know anything for sure. That Bible is not absolute. It is general truth. There is no real absolute. You cannot know anything for sure." They took the truth out.

2. When the truth goes, the second thing is, no mercy.

Because there is no truth, there is no mercy. Somebody said, "I think abortion is just terrible. I think it is the murder of all those unborn babies, by the millions and millions and millions. I am a Christian. I am going to get out, and I am going to go down, and I am going to get me a big poster with a ripped-up fetus on it, and I am going to march around this abortion clinic, and we are going to stand there. Hell freezes over, standing for God, standing for what is right." If you had just kept the truth, you would not even have to do those kinds of things. Why is that the way it is today? Because when you lose truth, you lose mercy. The Bible is a preservative. It is salt. It preserves things. Whether a man believes it or not, whether in this world you believe it or not, the very fact that there are men and women standing up, believing this book, preaching this book, laying out this book five times a week, putting the Word out all across the country—even

though 50% of the world is lost and dying and going to hell and do not even believe it—the bottom line is there is a preserving effect in society when you have truth. The men who are supposed to believe the truth believe it. A country, a society, a church is never eroded and destroyed because of unbelievers. It is always eroded and destroyed because of believers that dump the truth. It is never because of unsaved people. Jesus is the light of the world. He says now that you and I are the light of the world, and the Word of God is the preserving salt that preserves society, nations, and countries. God is going to ask the question, "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?"

3. In our society, just like in Israel, there is no truth, there is no mercy, and then the last thing, no knowledge of God.

Nobody knows anything about God anymore. You say, "Bob, Bob, Bob, I mean, you cannot turn on the Christian radio without hearing God all over the place. There are 9,000 guys preaching on... There are 10,000 Christian radios across this country, and they are all preaching. You have guys preaching all the time, while there are Christian radios that play God's songs about singing about God all day long. What are you talking about?" I am saying this: there is no knowledge of God in the land. There is a lot of junk out there going on that has nothing. It is an illusion. It is an illusion. I am going to tell you something. You can talk about God all day long. You can get on your knees. You can pray. You can weep. You can cry. You can do all the things that Christians are supposed to do, and you can wave your hanky and do everything in the world, but the bottom line is, if you do not believe this book is true, you are wasting your time, because at the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is not going to be about how many hankies you went through. It is not going to be about how many things you did. It is not going to be about "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" It is going to be truth.

VII. The Importance of Truth in Ministry and Life

I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There is a lot I am going to give an account for. No question about it. There are a lot of things I do not do right, a lot of attitudes I do not have that are right, and I am sure when I stand there, I am going to give an account. But I am going to tell you right now, standing here right now, I am going to tell you one thing I am never going to have to give an account for, and it is simply this: not declaring the truth plentifully. There will be no politics in this church. There will be none. I will not be the dictator. I will just be the instrument that God wants me to use to preach the truth. When I get up and preach to you Thursday night Bible study, Sunday morning, in our daily time together in the Word of God, however it works, I have one thing that I can tell you: "As the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." I do not know what else to tell you. There will not be any illusions. There will not be any crystal chandeliers. There will not be any dancing girls. It will not be all of that shimmery, chammy stuff that you look like. There will not be any big time. It will just be the old book. It will just be preaching the Word of God. Very frankly, folks, if that book is not enough to get the job done, then let us just close the doors and go home. I mean, let us all get together and pour our money and buy a Kmart. It has to be truth.

Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." What is he saying? Even though there was a priesthood down there, and in fact he was saying, "You are no priest to Me." What that tells me is that there are a lot of guys standing in the pulpit talking about what they think about God and what they like. God says, "You are not any preacher to Me." There is no preacher unless you have the truth. You were not a priest until you got the truth. You are not a preacher unless you have the truth. You are an illusion. You are something that is out there showing the world that you want to be just like the president. You want to be held up as some great spiritual guru in America, that people look at your church and say, "Wow, we do that. We can run 50,000 on Sunday too. We can do all this." Nobody cares how you get there. It has to be by the book.

I had a conversation with a guy a couple of years ago about a certain couple, and this was a private conversation. We talked about a certain couple that had been martyred for their faith. He was going on and talking about what a great thing that was. I was just being me. I was not being mean. He was telling me, he was talking about how that, "Boy, I will tell you what, what a great example for Christianity that was. And there was a real Christian, da-da-da-da." I said it, and I knew the situation. So I was not just speaking out of turn. I knew where they were trained. I knew what the guy that believed that trained them. I had more information than I let on to him. I just simply said this: "Here is the problem. I hope you are right. But here is the issue. Here is the real tragedy. There is somebody that goes all of their life and gives to God and gives to God and gives to God and gives to God and gets to the place where they die. Everybody stands back and thinks what great Christians they were. When the truth of the matter is, I know what those people believed about the Bible. The whole bottom line is this: you get to the Judgment Seat of Christ, and you go all that length, and you lose it all."

He had a hard time with that. He stood back and he looked at me and he said, "I do not believe that. You are going to tell me that those people that gave, invested their lives all their life, because they did not believe the Bible was the Word of God, you are telling me that they are going to lose everything at the Judgment Seat of Christ? They are going to lose their rewards?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Book, chapter, verse." He is like that. I had not had dessert yet. I was hoping he was going to pay for the lunch. Now I am screwed. I am going to have to do it myself. I looked right at him and I said, "Every man strives for the masteries. But if he does not run lawfully, he is not crowned." Now you tell me, big boy, what does running lawfully mean? Does that mean you never drive your car past 55 miles an hour at a 55-mile-per-hour speed limit? Or does that mean lawfully by the book? I will tell you, it means lawfully by the book. I am not saying you are going to do what is right all your life. I am not going to tell you that. You are going to make some mistakes. But I am going to tell you this: get your attitude of heart right now, right now, that whatever you do the rest of your life, you are doing it because you believe this book is the absolute perfect Word of God, and you are doing it because of truth. Not because of an allegiance to a school or anything else or some vague concept of God that you are going to martyr by. This martyr thing, we can go too far with that. The greatest man in history to destroy the Word of God was Origen. Origen was martyred for his faith. He was about as saved as my

three labs. In fact, my three labs are probably more saved than he was. Martyrdom means nothing.

See how we get so sidetracked. We hear somebody sing the most melodious song that just touches our hearts, and we sit there. Honestly, and this is true, and I am guilty of this too, but I fight it. You do not fight it. I fight it. I am stronger than you. You give in. I do not. For a minute I do. But then I grab myself around the throat and I choke myself down. I am more disciplined than you are. You fall for it. (Just kidding.) You hear somebody sing the most unbelievable song you have ever heard in your life. You sit there and you just close your eyes, and you can see the pearly gates opening. You see the clouds. You see the hand of God coming down and patting you on the head. You think to yourself, "That was..." And you ought to think, "Because that person sang that good, that must mean they really are a good Christian." It means absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing.

I had a guy, they used to, I used to have to interview all the people that we hired on the staff, and they were looking for a music man. They said, "We want the best music man in the world. We want our music services just to be ecstatic." So they bring in three or four guys, and I get there, and they go, "Okay, Bob, you go and talk to them and you interview them. You find out what we want." This one kid came in, and I am talking to him, just a nice kid, but typical in the mindset. I talked about song. I said, "What kind of song are you singing?" He said, "Well, I like, I am a mix. I like the old songs, like the contemporary songs." "Okay, I can deal with that. I am not a stick in the mud." Then he said, "Well, how good are you? What is your relationship with God like?" He looks at me and he says, "Right now, as we speak, I have memorized 150 songs about God." I look back at him and I said, "That is great. 150 verses." He did not.

Let me tell you something. I believe you have to have a song in your heart, but you have to have a word in your mouth. I believe having a song in your heart without the Word of God in your heart is fruitless. I have a song in my heart. I have the joy, joy, joy, joy down in, but I also have the Word of God. "I hid it in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." All things may be with Him. I think maybe the Indian life, like, let me write down my line. Do you have it in there? Is it in there? That is the difference. When you are driving down the road, going to work in the morning, you have 20, 30 minutes, so you listen to, "Oh, Jesus, I love you. Oh, you are my..." I did a hard day's night. I know I was down in New Orleans. Or is it, "Oh, I know you are in your car." 21st-century stoplights, buildings all around, other traffic. I know it is totally different, but are you sitting there in your heart like David on an old plain, staring over the skies? No wonder he said in Psalms 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God." He was not distracted by all of that. He is just sitting out there with that little harp, and he is just playing it. You are saying, "I bet this will go like this." He sings a little song to the Lord. He says, "Well, let me sing it." There is a verse in Deuteronomy that fits in there. He plays out for a while. Pretty soon, he started at six, and now it is eight. Now it is 9:30. He is just having the greatest time. He is looking around the sheep, there are two others saying to each other, "He is pretty good." He is having a good time. It is a beautiful night. It is just him and God. Those are the quality times that you build your relationship with God. That is where you find truth.

David did it out there while he was tending to sheep. You can do it in your car on the way to work. You can do it in the shower. You can do it wherever you have your time with just you and God. But the bottom line is, the question He is going to ask is, "How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?"

VIII. Conclusion: The Book is Enough

I love you. I want you to come. I have made up my mind when we started this church that I would take whatever time I have to take to help my people find God in a relationship with God. If that means throughout the week, we spend time together for you new people, I am there. If it means whatever you want to do on Thursday night or at any time. But the bottom line is this: I am not looking for a million-dollar-a-year job. I am not looking to be known nationally as the great. I am just looking for the truth. Because I know this: I know that today, in the age we live in, the truth is not popular. So you will not be popular. I will not be popular. But the bottom line is, it is popular with God. As Micaiah said, "As the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." Truth will always be truth. The truth will separate you. It never comes to the point where you get the illusion. I like to know where I am at with people. I do not like any hidden agendas. That is the way I am. I get that because that is the way God is. The one good thing about being a Christian, the way I am telling you to do it, you always know where you are at with God. You do not have to play the mental games that everybody else plays. You do not have to build a big building with all the facade and all the shiny stuff to give the illusion that God is here. God is in none of that. God is in this book. When you have the book, you have Him. When you do not, you do not have Him. Everything else is your illusion.

One of these days, the big, the best, the mightiest that we look at today and hear on the radio talking about all the great things about God, the bottom line is the one question God is going to ask them is, "Hey, pal, let me ask you a question. You were down there 30, 40 years. You had a great ministry. You had a great church. You had thousands and thousands and millions of people listen to you. I have one question for you: How hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?" The Word of God, the book.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for all You do for us. Help us, Father, to be mindful as a church. I know we are young. I know that, Lord, we are few in number. Lord, I know that, Lord, as time goes on, that, Lord, You will bring those people to us, and it will grow. Lord, it will be a thing where, that, Lord, You get the honor and glory. But, God, we ask You, we humbly beseech You, Father. Never let us depart from the truth. Never let us get sidetracked. Never let us get envious of anything or anybody else, Lord. Let us always be envious of You. The only thing that we covet, Father, is to be more like You: Your knowledge, Your wisdom, Your love, Your goodness. We do not want to lust after the things of the world, Lord, but allow us to lust after the things of the Word of God. Allow us to want more every day in our own personal lives to be like You. Allow us to want to love each other more, to do what is right more. Lord, never allow us to have that passive attitude toward sin. Lord, I know we are going to sin. The Bible says if we say we have no sin, we lie and deceive ourselves, and then the truth is not in us. But, Father, I pray that our attitude of heart will always be as such that the Word of God will

strike us down when we transgress Your law. Never let it be an easy thing for us to sin against God. Lord, we thank You for the men and women in this building today that love Your Word and love truth. Father, we commit to You a time to have truth. Lord, a time that this church will be built and fastened on this old book. Lord, that one thing that none of us will ever have to be afraid of with the Judgment Seat of Christ, when asked that question, "Have we plentifully declared the thing as it is?" Because let us preach Your Word. As Micaiah said, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.