

1 Corinthians 3

Sunday 11/9/2003

I would like you to turn over to the book of 1 Corinthians. Isn't it great to be saved this morning? You folks are the greatest people in the world. I am so looking forward to all that is going on this week, for Saturday night, and the fun time that you all have. We are just looking forward to the specialness of having some good fellowship together.

I. Building a Church and a Relationship with God

What we have been doing is, when we started our church, we went to the Bible and really started focusing on what the Bible says about building a church. So we went to the book of Nehemiah. The book of Nehemiah is a book that really talks about how to build a church. You would not maybe think that, being in the Old Testament, but we explained all that and we went through it for a couple of months and we looked at all of that.

Then we wanted to address the host of new Christians, young couples, and young singles that have come into our church who truly want to learn how to be better husbands, better wives, better Christians, and develop their relationship with the Lord and build a relationship and just do it the way God wants it to be done. So we decided that we were going to talk about how to build a relationship with the Lord. We were going to talk about how to do it step by step, and we are going to walk through this thing all the way through.

It is an exciting study for me because it is a thing where I do not care how old you are in the Lord, or how long you have been saved; it is good to go back and look at those things.

II. Going Back to Bethel

In the Old Testament, there are a number of very interesting places to study. One of those places is a place called Bethel. Bethel was a place where Jacob really got his life right with God. The word Bethel means "bread." It is an incredible place in the Bible. It is a place where every time Jacob got really despondent, every time he really needed to have a refreshment of time with God, he would go back to Bethel.

For us in the Bible, it stands as a time that I do not care how long you are saved, or how much you know about the Bible, all of us need to go back to Bethel at some time or the other. I look at this, we have some men and women in here that have been saved a long time. You know the Bible. We have men in here that can preach the Bible, and women in here that can teach the Word of God and do a fair job of preaching, as far as laying the Word of God out. But all of us, we need to go back to Bethel from time to time.

I look at this as for all of us. We have young Christians that are trying to learn how to build a relationship with God, and I want to meet that need. I have told you time and time again, you do not have to be a member of our church for this to happen, but I will spend an hour a week with anybody in the Bible, helping you learn the Bible if you so desire. You can come over to my house and we will sit down, and we will go through the Bible. You can ask any question you

want to ask. I will work through any problem with you. I will help you. If you are a young Christian and you truly desire a relationship with God, that is the best offer I know that I can give you. I am that concerned about your relationship with God. Very frankly, that is my job as pastor, to take care of your spiritual need. So that offer is always on the table. I do not always say it every week, but I am telling you today, we have a lot of visitors here today, and I just want you to know I am here for you. That is my job. We enjoy the Word of God together. So I look at this time in the Word of God as going back to Bethel.

III. The Judgment Seat of Christ and Building on the Foundation

I know also that in building a relationship with God, the first thing you have to do is define some things. We have been doing that. We have been talking about different aspects of the Christian relationship and defining different things. A couple of weeks ago, we started a study on the Judgment Seat of Christ, probably without a doubt the most important doctrine for any Christian anywhere, because that doctrine is something that is very important as far as your relationship with God. We have talked about how the world has really lost its understanding of that. Because of that, Christians today do not understand that someday they are going to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are going to give an account.

Two days in the Bible we talked about; we defined them. The first one is the Day of the Lord. That is the Second Coming of Christ. The other one is the Day of Jesus Christ, and that is the Judgment Seat of Christ. So I want to begin reading again in 1 Corinthians 3. Let us come down through here, and then we will get into the final part of our series on this this morning.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;

Father, again, we come to You today, and we ask You to take this time that we have set aside to look into Your Word. We thank You for the folks that are here today, and may something be said today that challenges their heart. Lord, if today there is someone here that does not know You as their own personal Savior, may through the preaching of the Word of God today, may something ignite their soul, that they see and understand what the Lord has done for them. Thank You, Father. Bless us now, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Last week we started coming down through this, and we talked about the fact that the Bible says we are laborers together, that this church, as any church, its success will be its cohesiveness, how it works together as a team. The Bible says that we are to be a wise master builder, in 1 Corinthians 3:10. It also says that when a man gets saved in 1 Corinthians 3:11, he lays a foundation. That foundation, 1 Corinthians 3:11, is Jesus Christ. Then the Bible says that the rest of our lives, we build on that foundation three things that are good or three things that are bad. We talked about the wood, the hay, and the stubble last week, dead things for dead Christians. The Bible says there is coming a day when the day is going to declare the things that we have done.

It would be ridiculous to think that God would save us without any purpose or plan. God has a plan. God has a purpose and God has a plan. God did not make earth and make people on it just because He did not have anything to do, and He just wanted to kind of put something in motion. God has a plan. You know that plan if you have your chart. We talked about it on Thursday night Bible study, and I would be glad to go through with anybody that wanted to really understand it, but God has a plan. He saved you to be part of that plan. Simply stated, the Judgment Seat of Christ is there because God is going to reward men and women who get saved and find out what God's plan is, and then the rest of their lives lend themselves to that plan.

That is what churches are all about. We are here today because we recognize that God has a plan. We are here today because we want to help God fulfill that plan. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." But then He also said, "Ye are the light of the world," because He was going back to heaven. When He went back to heaven, He left us here as the church as an ongoing proponent of putting out the Gospel that we might fulfill God's plan. That is what this church is all about. That is what your life is all about.

We want to talk about building on this foundation. Very simply, somebody says, "What does it mean to have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? More important, how do you have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?" It is simple. My whole ministry, my whole life, is to

take complicated things and break them down so you can understand it. I can tell you the secret of a successful Christian life, what it is, real easy. It is not hard. People do not have to buy anybody's book. They do not have to go to any seminar or seminary or spend all their time searching. I have met people in my life that for 40 years, I would talk with them and they would say, when I asked them what they were doing, "Well, I am on a search for God," for 20, 30, 40 years. Let me tell you something, it does not take that long. I can give you today exactly what God wants you to do because if God is going to judge us at the Judgment Seat of Christ, if He is going to judge us, if He gave us a plan and He gave us a Bible that tells us about that plan, and then God is going to judge us someday whether we fulfill it or not, do you really think God would make the plan tough? Man makes it tough.

In fact, and I am going to talk about this next week, not only is the Judgment Seat of Christ laid out in the Bible of what to expect, but it is also laid out in the Bible, the questions God is going to ask at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is not like having to take a big test and then somebody giving you the answers before you have to take the test. How can you fail that? You have to really be stupid to fail it. How can you show up at the Judgment Seat of Christ and not get everything that God wants for you? If you find yourself there and you find yourself losing all your rewards, it will not be because God made it hard. He gave you a Bible, He gave you preachers, He gave you churches, He gave you the Spirit of God to show you everything, and then told you not only how to do it, but told you what He was going to ask so you would know what to target on.

Let us face it, life is an investment. Life is an investment for you and for me. We have talked about this before as a Christian, life is an investment. You will either invest your life in the right things and come out greater at the Judgment Seat of Christ, or you will invest your life in the wrong things and you will lose your rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is as simple as that. I am simply going to show you today what you need to do the rest of your life once you are saved.

First, you recognize that you are a building. The Bible says you are God's temple. The Bible says you are to be a wise master builder. The Bible says that no other foundation can a man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. The day you get saved, you lay that foundation. The rest of your life, you are to build upon that foundation three things. Forget the wood, hay, and stubble. We know those are the wrong things. We talked about that last week. Today, I want to focus on the three right things that you need to build. If you understand this and you do this, you will have an unbelievable relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Building with Gold: Knowing God's Deity

The first thing He says is gold. Gold in the Bible stands for the deity of Christ. In our own society, gold is the highest standard. We talk about the gold standard, or we talk about finding gold, and it never loses value. It always goes up in value because it is the world standard. You talk about in the credit card world, getting a gold card, or at the Olympics, to go for the gold. To win the gold medal is the number one thing. In our own society, gold without a doubt is the

highest standard that we can have. In the Bible, gold represents the highest standard that God has, that is His deity.

If you would go back and look at the Old Testament, they built what they call the ark. The ark was made with wood, but it was overlaid with gold. That represented the wood, Christ's humanity. When Christ came in the flesh, He was human. But overlaid with gold represents the fact that not only was God human, but He was God, and it represented His deity. You will find a little bit later on, when they are into the land and they build the temple, Solomon's Temple, that whole temple is overlaid with gold. I read a book one time, a number of years ago, it was written in 1950. It was written by a saved architect that worked for the New York Architectural Society or whatever, and he was a Bible believer. He took the dimensions of Solomon's Temple. In 1950, he said that to overlay that with gold would take about \$171 billion in gold. That was by 1950 standards. That is almost 100 years ago. What would it be today, 50 some years later?

The Bible says that New Jerusalem is the city of gold, that the whole city is overlaid with gold, because gold in the Bible represents your relationship with God in the sense of getting to know who He is. When you get saved, you met Christ as your Savior. After that, you get to know Him as your best friend. The Bible says in Matthew 22 that we are to love the Lord thy God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, and with all of our mind.

How do you do that? How do you come to the place in your life where you love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all of your soul? That seems like a tough thing to do. There is a process. The process, first of all, is to get to know who He is. The first thing you lay on that foundation is gold. You get to know who He is.

I told you before, and I give you little tidbits all the time and most of you pick up on them. When God wrote the Bible, He wrote it very directly, and He wrote it that everything in it means something. So when you start coming through the Bible and you are a young Christian, and you say to yourself, "I want to walk with God. I want to have a walk with God. I want to learn to walk with God." And you start reading through the Bible, you find in the Bible there are only two men the Bible says walked with God. Did other men walk with God? Certainly they did. Why did God pick two men that He would state in His Word that they walked with God, when there were many other people that probably did walk with God? I will tell you why, because if you want to study what you have to have in your life to walk with God, study the lives of those two men.

The Bible says about two men in the Bible, only two, that they were God's friend. Were there other men in the Bible and women in the Bible who were God's friend? Certainly. Why did the Bible pick just two people that if you wanted to learn how to have a relationship with God, that He is your friend? In their life, we think the relationship with God that we should have is so pious and so spiritual to the place where the Bible says that God wants to be your friend. The Bible says that God wants you to talk to Him and be with Him like your best friend. Can you say anything to your best friend? Surely. Can you get upset with your best friend? Absolutely. But in all of that, it is never a case where that person is not my best friend. That is the way it is with God.

You want to look at these two men's lives and see how one of them is Moses. You want to study the life of Moses. The Bible says about Moses that Moses spoke with God like a man speaking with his friend face to face. You want to see the relationship that Moses had with God. It is incredible. If you will study, I am only going to give you one, you have to study the other one on your own. But if you just get that one guy, Moses, and look at their life and what kind of relationship they had, from the very beginning, Moses alibying with God about not wanting to go before Pharaoh and arguing back and forth and God talking with him, just like you would talk to your best friend.

There are places in there that after the children of Israel come out, the children of Israel are always in problems, always in problems. It is so funny to see this. When you look at it, it shows you what kind of relationship Moses had and what kind of relationship that you could have. One day, Moses comes in and he says, "God, I am so fed up with these people, they will not do what is right, they do not listen to me, they are the biggest bunch of jerks in the world, God, why do You not just go down and kill them all?" God says, "Now Moses, come on now. You know that they are a stiff-necked and a hardened people. But you know also that they are My people and I picked you to be the leader. Now, come on, Moses, you have to get a grip on things and you have to do this thing." Moses says, "Okay." Two weeks later, God comes in. "Moses, I am going to wipe those people out, I am going to kill them, I am going to destroy them, they have profaned My name, I am going to wipe them out to the ends of the earth." And Moses says, "Come on, Lord, do You not remember all the promises You made to them? Do You not remember," and he goes through that thing and God says, "Okay, Moses, you are right."

You may think that is a relationship with God that you can have. Moses spoke to God face to face. They had a relationship, they had a friendship. They both understood the purpose. For a moment, I do not believe that God was weak, and I believe that God allowed Moses to have that kind of relationship with Him, and I think it built him closer and probably the inner man in the Old Testament. But if you want to learn how to be God's friend, study Moses.

In the Bible, there is only one man that is said to have God's heart. If somebody says, "I want to find out how to have God's heart," then you have to study this guy's life, his name is David. You realize in the New Testament, there are only four people that Jesus says He loves. Did He love, well, the Bible says, "For God so loved the world." Yes, I understand that. But why did God pick four people that He specifically said, "I love them," when He loved everybody else? Why did not the God of great love just say, "I loved everybody," and put that preface? Because God wanted to show you, if you want to learn how to love God, and that is what we are talking about, getting to know who He is. If you want to learn how to love God, study these people's lives. One of them is Mary, one of them is Martha, one of them is Lazarus. What a study they are. And one of them is the Apostle John.

Do you ever notice the 12 apostles? You want to learn how to build a relationship with God? You want to learn how to build upon that foundation gold? I will tell you how. Look at the 12 apostles. The 12 apostles really represent Christianity. You have 12 of them. One of them is a phony, Judas. We know that in most Christian circles, not everybody that says they are saved is probably saved. Within that 12, one was a phony. There were only three that really, if you look at

the study and study their life, there are only three that really experienced the power of God more than the rest of them: Peter, James, and John. On the Mount of Transfiguration, it is Peter, James, and John. When the great miracles are done, it is Peter, James, and John. That shows me that out of all of Christianity, a minority is really going to build a relationship with God that counts. Everybody else is too busy doing their own thing.

Out of those three, when it came down to the final act and the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary's cross, even in the inner three, two of them are missing. There is only one man that goes all the way to the end, and that is the Apostle John. He is the fourth man that Jesus says He loves. He is the only one that goes all the way. When Christ is hanging on the cross, when He is dying for your sins and for mine, where is John? Peter is denying Him in the garden. James is running off down the road someplace, but John is at the feet of Jesus on the cross of Calvary, exactly where Mary is. Mary and Martha, when you get into that whole study, he has got the proper place. That is where you and I should be.

I know when Jesus is there and He is dipping the sop and He is saying, "One of you will betray Me." You have to look at this sometime. He says, "One of you will betray Me." The Bible says, each one of them turned to Christ and said, "Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I?" John says, "Lord, who is it?" He knew it was not going to be him. John is the only man in the Bible, the only man in the world that does something that nobody else does, but you can do.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

The Bible says that he laid his head on the breast of Jesus, and by doing so, he heard the heartbeat of God. There is not any other man in the Bible. David may have been a man after God's own heart, and the only man to do that, but John not only was after God's heart, John heard something that even David did not experience, he heard God's heartbeat.

What does it take for you and for me to really do something for God? We are going to have to hear the heartbeat of God. How do you hear the heartbeat of God? I think about that thing of John laying his head down there on the breast of Jesus in the quietness of that room, and I look at that scene and what it must have been, and how God pulled his head down to His bosom, and he heard the very heartbeat of Almighty God. I am going to tell you something. For you to go all the way with Christ just like John did, for you to wind up through any trial and tribulation and be where God wants you to be, it is going to take the same kind of dedication. At some point in your life, you are going to have to hear the heartbeat of God, and the only way you do that is to lay on that foundation gold, who He is. Find out who He is. Get to know Him. Get to know Him as Noah got to know Him as your friend, walking with Him. Get to know Him as Moses got to know Him as your friend. Get to the place where you can speak to God face to face.

We get the idea that when we pray, we have to be so formal. It is the position of our body and the folding of our hands and the bowing of our heads and the closing of our eyes, and we have to have a prayer that is such a formalized, "Oh, God of the mountains and the trees and the birds and the brooks and all those things." Let me tell you something, that is not what God wants. You would not talk to your friend that way. I find myself in the morning when I roll out of bed, the first thing I say is, "Lord, I love You. Thank You for this day. Thank You for the good night,

Lord." We just talk all day long, driving down the road and seeing somebody over here and saying, "Lord, I pray for that person." Lord, I am thinking about what God is going to do, getting up in the morning and going through your routine and thinking about the people that God has given you. God puts them in your mind and God brings people by. I will be up in the morning and I will think of somebody in this church and I will say, "God, pray for them." And God will bring somebody else and I will say, "Lord, pray for them." But it is not a thing where you go turn out the light and you get a little candle symbolic of the Holy Spirit of God. You just talk to God just like you talk to your friend.

I used to work out there and I used to mark those power lines in the ground. There is always a chance somebody is going to hit them and get killed and you can mismark them. You do not want anybody digging into power lines coming out of a transformer someplace. It is easy to believe. I would be out there and I would just say, "Lord, make sure this is the right spot. Oh, Lord, just make sure, just keep me on this line here." After that, the world is my parish. "Here we go, Lord, come on, do not let anybody get hurt causing me." In all the years I did it, I never had a damage. I believe when you take God to work with you, things go a lot better, that is what I believe. I believe if you take God anywhere with you, things go a lot better. But that builds a relationship. The only time you ever talk to God is when you go over to your parents for Christmas or Thanksgiving and somebody mumbles up one of them prayers, or when you get into trouble, then you are never going to build a relationship with God. You need to learn to talk with Him like a man speaks with his friend. John, study his life. John, all the way. There was no doubt in John's mind that he was the man that God wanted him to be. It was an incredible thing. So he says, when you get saved, you lay a foundation. That foundation is gold. Gold represents who He is.

V. Building with Silver: Understanding Redemption's Price

Then the next piece of metal. He says gold, then he says silver. All through the Bible, gold represents the deity of Christ. But in the Bible, silver represents the price of redemption. Just as the first thing you have to lay on that foundation is gold and get to know Him, the second thing you have to build on it is silver. You have to get to know what He did for you. Silver.

I told you last week that people have forgotten the cause. They have forgotten the cost. And they have forgotten the consequences. People have forgotten the cost. They do not know who God is. Therefore, they do not understand the purpose that God saved them for. They do not understand what God is doing. They do not realize how they fit into the program. God's people have forgotten the cause. I am going to tell you right on top of it, God's people have forgotten the cost. We do not understand what it costs for you and I to go to heaven. Where gold tells me who He is, the silver tells me what He did, the price of my salvation.

When you go back there in the Old Testament in Numbers 3, it talks about how they redeemed the firstborn that came out of Egypt. The Bible says they redeemed them with silver. In Exodus 30:13, it talks about the amount of silver. Remember the story of Joseph back there in Genesis 37, that when he was sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites who wound him up down in Egypt,

he was sold for 20 pieces of silver. Christ was sold for 30 pieces of silver. In Leviticus 27, it talks about the breakdown for the silver paid for redemption.

I want you to know my dear friend this morning that it cost something for you and for me to be here. It cost something for you and for me to have the relationship that we have with God. Just like little kids growing up, little kids become indifferent and they take things for granted. We as God's people, we get so successful. We have so many nice things. We have so many busy things in our life that we actually forget the price tag that came for you and for me being saved.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

It is reasonable service for you to give your life to Him once you understand that He gave His life for you.

I will make one promise, as a pastor. I say it all the time and I mean it. You will never see me pushing you to give a lot of money. I grew up in churches where once a year they had a stewardship banquet. They were kind of like a, that is a nice name for an arm-twisting ceremony to bring you in, feed you a meal, and then put a place card in front of you and then have some high-priced guy come in that will work you over and make you feel guilty and that you will put down on that card, "I am going to give next year \$10,000." Then my job as pastor the rest of the year, make sure you get it in. Every Sunday, get up. "Do not forget your commitment. Do not forget your commitment. Do not forget your commitment. You committed. Do not you give, do not you forget this." And just beg and weep and do everything in the world to manipulate your emotions so you will give to God. We do not have any offering on the loose. Well, I guess we do. But you do not want to put any money in it, take it home and send a letter to somebody. I do not ever want the emphasis to be on money. Never, never, never.

We are not going to ever have faith promise. That is another trick they use. They say, "Now what are you willing to trust God for in your giving? You are giving 69 cents a day. What are you willing to trust God for? Will you have the faith to step out and claim God's promise that if you say I am going to give a million dollars next year, God is God enough to bring it through." And people out there and they get all emotional, "Oh yeah, I want to do what is right. Oh, I want to trust God all this. Oh, I will sign, put it down. No, not just a million, I want \$10 million for me." Listen, if God can split the Red Sea and God can make the stars, He can bring \$10 million and I will give at least another 69 cents back to God.

Your giving to God purely needs to be based on how much you love Him. How much you love Him. The Bible says, "If any man loved God, the same is known of him." I will never give you a commitment card. We will never have a stewardship banquet. We will never have faith promise. The bottom line is this, God, this church has needs. Everybody understands that. The bottom line is you give whatever this book and whatever God or whatever this church or whatever this thing means to you, you give because you love Him. Not because somebody is twisting your arm. That

Bible says in 1 Corinthians 8:3, "If any man loved God, the same is known of him." It is just a fact of life. We give things to people whom we love.

Let us face it. Your wife's birthday is coming up or your girlfriend's birthday is coming up and it passes. You know how it goes. Get up in the morning and she is all bouncing around at the birthday and you have not figured out what is going on yet. You say, "What about her? I mean, she is bouncing around for it. It is your birthday." And she is thinking, "Oh, he has got a surprise." She is downstairs, she is looking, kind of looking in the closet, looking for that new whatever, and she is looking for the little, they like them little boxes that flip up, and she is looking for something like that, and she does not see it, but she is undaunted because she knows you and she knows it probably sometime during the day while she is at home, a package is going to show up. Somebody special is going to show up at her door with some big deal that is just a knockout. So she gives you a hug and kiss, fixes your breakfast, puts you off to work, and you are thinking, "What in the world is her deal?" And she is around the house looking out the window, looking at the car, "Oh, see the UPS truck. Where is the FedEx man?" And at about three o'clock, by three o'clock I would be upset and be worried, but not her. What is she thinking now? She is thinking, "Oh, it was not new clothes, he would have given me that one. It was not a ring, he would have given me that before I left. It is now three o'clock in the afternoon, I have not heard from him. Car. It is a car, it is a car." And she is just walking around there, "A car, oh, he knows I like that little Firebird over there or that, this or that, or he knows and he likes, oh, it is a car." And about four, four-thirty, you come home at five, she is going to drive it in, and he is going to put that parking lot, and I am going to act surprised, and I am just going to be sitting here, in my June Cleaver clothes, and I am just going to sit here, and just kind of wait and let him come in. Here comes five o'clock. She hears the car pull in, she does not move, because she hears, she thinks she hears a different sound in the car, and about that same time the neighbor is pulling in, and all those things, and she sits there, and he comes in, you come in the house and she says, "Hi, honey," and he says, "Hi, how are you doing?" She says, "Oh, I am just fine," and he is saying, "What in the world is happening to her?" And he just smiles around and she says, "Well, it is not coming now, but it will probably be, oh, I know, my parents are going to bring it over tonight." And she fixed this great supper, and she does all these things, she is bouncing around, and you are just saying, "What is her deal?" And she is thinking, "Oh, it is coming, for him to wait all day long, it is going to be a big one, and it may be, it may be it is two cars. I bet it is a car filled with clothes." It is just one of those things. And about eight o'clock, nothing has happened, and she is saying, "Well, he is so funny, he is going to let this thing happen before I go to bed. Oh, he thinks he has got me, he is such a cutie." About that time, you are rolling to bed, the lights go out, and you are laying there, and all of a sudden, you hear, and you turn on that light and you say, "What was that?" And now she has come to the full realization, no car, no diamonds, no clothes, no nothing, and she is hot. You finally realize that it is her birthday. So men, what do we do? Now we are like Trent Green, who just got the ball snapped to him, and realized that his line that was defending him went out for some big hot dog with sauerkraut on it, and the whole other side of the team is coming after you. What do you do? You think quick, and you say something like, "Oh, honey, come on, you know I love you." Guys, let me ask you a question, does that work? I have some news for you, it does not work with Him either. You give, because you love Him, they are both of that. I am not going to manipulate you. I do not care if

you do not give anything. I do not really care, but I know this, I know that in everything in life, when you understand who He is, and you realize what He has done for you, it all comes natural.

God never intended your spirituality to be forced in any way. I will not force you to study the Bible. I will work my tail off all week long to come up with a sermon to preach to you, to give you something to excite you, and illuminate you, and give you something to just turn you on with the Word of God, and let God's Spirit do the rest. I am not a token. I will not get up here and put any pressure on you to give anything at all. I will just teach you what Christ has done for you, who He is, and build on those three things, and the rest takes care of itself. The truth of the matter is, and I know we take up an offering, and I know that you give. But let us be honest. If we really had to give back to Him what it cost for Him to give to us, we would all come up short. That is why it is not about the amount. It is about what you have in here, and you give because you love Him. You give because you love Him.

I know people that say, "Well, you give unto God, you give unto God." I saw a sign coming in, a little church down here, it said, "What you give to God today, He will multiply to you tomorrow." Maybe not. But that is a nice deal because we are all greedy. "Who would not give us today? Well, they give God 20, He is going to give me 40 on Monday. Let us go. I am for that. Let us up the ante, let us go." Wrong motive. As much as knowing who He is, it is important to know what He did for you.

What does it mean when you sing to Him? Do you ever sing to Him? God is the greatest thing in the world to sing to because He does not care how bad you sound. There are some people in here when I stand next to you and we are singing, I just move over there a little bit. It is rough, but I appreciate your heart. I just like to have a tape of you someplace or me someplace. But do you ever understand why we sing? Do you understand why a woman likes love songs? You know why down in Latin America and those places that when you want to date somebody, the first thing you do is get a little mariachi band, pay them a couple pesos and they go over and serenade her and they tell her about somebody who loves her and she does not even know who it is and you are standing over there going. Well, that is the way to do it. Music will always get to her. When you get one of them Latin guys down there singing, "Oh, sta-da-dee-dah sta-do-da-sta-do-do-do," and she is saying, "Oh, this is so beautiful, beautiful." And he is saying, "Aye, aye, aye, aye," and you are saying, "Oh, this is wonderful." And the guy, you are over there going, "Aye, aye, aye. Aye, aye, aye, aye, over here." She says, "Oh, I love this guy." It works.

We sing songs. It is one of those things where every Sunday, every time we sing:

"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan, Oh, the grace that brought it down to man, Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary."

"When I survey the wondrous cross On whom the Prince of Glory died, My richest gain I count but lost, And pour contempt on all my pride."

It says it. When we sing, it is not just on Sunday morning. When you know who He is and you understand what He has done for you, as the Bible says:

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Do you ever do it? Ever driving down that old road someplace? Nobody around. And you just down there, you just feel God in your heart. You think about something God gave you in the Word of God. Or you think about something God did for you. You are just driving down there and all of a sudden:

"Up Calvary's mountain, one dreadful morn, Walked Christ, my Savior, weary and worn; Facing for sinners death on the cross, That He might save them from endless loss. O blessed Redeemer, precious Redeemer, Seen now I see Him on Calvary's tree; Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading, Bound for my healing, dying for me."

Ever say it? That last verse:

"Oh, how I love Him, Savior and Friend, How can I praise His ever-fine dance? Through years unnumbered on heaven's shore, My tongue shall praise Him forevermore. Blessed Redeemer, precious Redeemer, Seen now I see Him on Calvary's tree; Wounded and bleeding, for sinners pleading, Bound for my healing, dying for me."

The price. "Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan, Oh, the grace that brought it down to man, Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span at Calvary."

That foundation you built, it was laid the day you got saved, and that foundation is Jesus Christ. The rest of your life, you build upon it gold, you get to know who He is. You build upon it silver, you get to know what He did for you.

VI. Building with Precious Stones: Soul Winning

Somebody said, "Bob, how do you win souls? Bob, I want to win people to Christ. How do you come to the place in your life where you really, really, really become the soul winner that God wants you to be?" I went to a church one time and they had a seminar on soul winning. I saw this guy had a book on how to win people to Christ and all of this. "Bob, how do you do it? How do you do it?" You just look at 1 Corinthians 3. Precious stones is the next one. Precious stones in the Bible are people. They are people. It is real simple folks. When you get to know who He is and you get to know what He did for you, you just cannot help but tell somebody else about it. You cannot.

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

That is Christ. Gold, silver, precious stones.

I was talking to one of our visitors, Ryan, this morning that came there and he is in the Navy. Ryan, when I was in the military, I actually saw a guy get the Congressional Medal of Honor. It was an incredible thing. One of the most profound things in my life. I was stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. On this day, it was an incredible thing. This guy had won the Congressional Medal of Honor over Vietnam. They brought him back over here and they had a big deal about it. I will never forget. The whole fort turned out. I was standing there, I could get a pretty good view of it. It was all lined up, all the companies, and the band was playing and everybody did a deal with it. All the generals were there and somebody from the White House was there and they did a pass in review and they came down through that thing. They called his name out and all that rank of people, you saw this guy in a green uniform, step out, walked down through this thing. He comes up here and he saluted, and they saluted back to him. Then somebody over the loudspeaker, they read the citation, what this guy had done. Everybody was just standing there. Then they took that blue medal, that ribbon around there and they put it around his neck. That old general stood back and shook his hand and saluted. I never saw anything so stiff and smart in all my life. There was not a guy in that place that did not have goosebumps running up and down his back. It was an incredible thing. And I thought to myself, "Wow."

What a day it is going to be at the Judgment Seat of Christ. I have all the respect for military men in the world. I love them. We have a lot of military men in here. Guys who have been in the Marines, guys who have been in the Army, guys who have been in the Navy, guys who have been in the Air Force. I have utmost respect for them. There are not better guys in this world than anybody who will lay down their life for the country. All the respect in the world. A guy does something like that and saves people's lives. This guy saved, I do not know how many guys, it was an incredible thing. And they deserve it.

But let me tell you something, there is a day coming. I never got a Congressional Medal of Honor. I never got anything. What is coming today is the Judgment Seat of Christ. What a day it is going to be. When God calls your name out in front of the assembled universe. There are all the angels, there are all the cherubim, there are all the seraphim, there is every saint saved from every place down through history. And He calls your name out and you walk down there in front of the King of Kings. Because you recognized who He was and you recognized what He did. And you understood that precious stones are likened to people.

The Bible says in 1 Thessalonians 2:19 and other places, the Bible talks about there are five crowns you can get as a believer. One of the crowns is soul winning. The indication is that for everybody who went to Christ, a Jew, as we have talked about in the Old Testament, goes into that crown. Now you say, "What good are those crowns? Why would you want all of that? I mean, if it is all for the Lord." The Bible gives the indication in Revelation 4:10 that when the Lord comes back and the whole thing is done before we go into eternity, that we take those crowns that represent everything we did. And we walk up and we lay it at the throne at the feet of

Jesus and say to Him, "Lord, I did it. Thank You for these crowns. Thank You for my millennial inheritance. But the truth of the matter is, Lord, I would not have any, I would not for You. So here, I give them back to You." Now I enjoy the aspect of a crown, but I do not really care about that. I want what I saw in Fort Devens, Massachusetts 35 years ago. I want, before the assembled universe, I do not want a crown, I do not want a medal. I just want my Lord to look down at me and say, "Bob, well done, thou good and faithful servant." Brother, you will not hold me down when that happens. There is no reason why it cannot happen in your life. It is all about what your goals are in life. It is all about building a relationship with Christ, where it is gold, it is silver, and it is precious stone, other people. I am telling you, you cannot get to know who He is without getting to know what He did. And you cannot get to know who He is and what He did without telling other people about it. It just will not happen. In other words, everything in the Christian life that brings you to the place where you get everything you need at the Judgment Seat of Christ and stand there before Him comes natural. There is not one contrived thing you have to do. There is not anything you have to manipulate. There is not any extra thing you have to go study. You can just get it from believing what this book says and building upon that foundation, gold, silver, and precious stones.

VII. The Laodicean Church and True Riches

Revelation 3 talks about the Laodicean church. The Laodicean church, it says, is a church that has need of nothing. It is wretched, it is miserable, it is poor, it is blind. If that is not Christianity today, I do not know what is. It is wretched, it says. Sin-racked. It is miserable, no joy. It is poor, no reward. It is blind, no Bible. The Bible says it is naked, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. What I have given you today is the true riches that He talks about in Revelation 3. These are the true riches. You get saved, when you get saved, you lay that foundation which is Jesus Christ. The rest of your Christian life, all we are doing, and we are laborers together, we are wise master builders. All we do is build upon that foundation: gold, getting to know who He is; silver, getting to know what He did for you; precious stones, telling somebody else about Him.

VIII. The Example of General Booth: Others

Years ago, General Booth, who started the great Salvation Army, which for many, many years was an unbelievable soul-winning organization that took in the down-and-outers and just won thousands of people to Christ, millions of people to Christ. William Booth was a Confederate Civil War General, got saved and went from the Confederate Army to the Salvation Army, got saved, and built one of the most tremendous organizations. I remember reading a story about right before he died. It was Christmas of that year, and every year, all across this country, General Booth would address his people and inspire them of what they had already done and what they were going to do next year. He had been very sick. In fact, he died just a matter of days after this day. That night, all around this country, they were waiting on the radio to hear General Booth and what he had to say. He was so weak, he was so sickly, but yet he was not going to miss the opportunity to speak to his people. Everybody was gathered around their radio, they did not have television back then. They all gathered around their radios waiting, and they heard music come on, and they played some Christian music back in that time and laid the whole

thing out, what was going to happen, and they turned it over and they said, "Now hear General William Booth, General of the Salvation Army, with his message for his people." He only said one word. He was sick, he was weak. He did not have a lot of energy, but he got out one word. In that one word, he said it all. He simply said the word, "Others."

That is what it is about. It is about people. It is about people who are hurting today. It is about people who are sad today. It is about people who do not have any direction today. It is about people who want to build a relationship in their family with their wives or their husbands or their children, they want to raise them. That is what it is about. The Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bible calls it the terror of the Lord, but it does not have to be a terror because very clearly, very plainly, it is very simple. It is probably the easiest doctrine in the Bible. When you get saved, you just build three things on that foundation. There are three things that I will help you with. Every time we preach, every time we teach, anything we do, my goal is to build on your foundation one of those three things: gold, who He was; silver, what He did; precious stones, other people.

IX. Invitation and Closing Prayer

Every head bowed and every eye closed. We are going to be finished here in just a moment. I hope that it helped you today. I know that we all want to have, and I can actually say this, I know that 99.9% of people in this church want to do what is right with the Word of God, if not 100%, I do not know of anybody who does not. I am just leaving a percentage there for somebody. But I know this, I know that it takes just what we talked about this morning. It takes just building on that foundation, learning about Him, learning about what He did. And then naturally it will come in time that you will start to tell somebody else about it.

Let me ask you a question this morning before we leave and we will be done here in just a moment. You have heard the message today, I know the Holy Spirit of God has walked up and down these aisles and whatever need you have in your heart today, He has spoken to. For some of you, maybe it is just a need to get closer to Him. For some of you, maybe it is a need to spend more time in His Word or really commit yourself to what we talked about today. For some of you, maybe it is to be a better husband or a better wife or be a better parent. But for some of you, maybe God spoke to you this morning that if you died right now today, you do not know for sure if you would go to heaven or not. It is about others. First and foremost, the Bible says that Christ died for you and He died for me. If you are here this morning and you do not know for sure if you would die right now that you would go to heaven, with every head bowed and every eye closed and no one looking around, would you allow me to pray for you? I will not embarrass you. I just want to pray for you. If you make any decision and move this morning, it will be on your own. Nobody will come and get you. Nobody will embarrass you at all. But every head is bowed and every eye closed, listen, if God cared enough about you this morning to speak to your heart and you know that He did or He did not, you care enough about saying, "God, I want prayer. I want to know more about what You have done in my heart and my life." With every head bowed and every eye closed, is there a man or a woman that would say, "Bob, here is my hand. If I died right now, I am not sure that I would go to heaven, pray for me." Anybody? We are not going to wait long. Anybody at all? Others. It is about others. It is about men and women

lost without Christ and Christ coming to save. The only reason I can give this invitation this morning is because I know the price that He paid and I know Him. I am telling you, He is the best friend you will ever have. He will stick with you when nobody else will. I promise you. Anybody at all before we pray, close this morning? God bless you, sweetheart. Thank you. God bless you. Anybody else? Anybody else?

Father, we do thank You and praise You. Lord, we love You so much and we thank You, Father, for today. We thank You for Your Word. I ask You, Father, to take the Word of God now and Lord, speak to the hearts of these men and women. Although I do not know their need, I do not know where they are at. I am just glad they are here. Holy Spirit of God, I pray today that You will just do in our hearts what needs to be done. I thank You for this young lady that raised her hand. Lord, You know her need. I pray, Father, that You will give her the courage and give her the ability, Father, to search out her own heart where she is at with the Lord. Lord, if she is not sure, I pray, Father, You will give her the courage to make sure. We love You so much. We thank You so much for all that You do for us. I just pray this morning, Father, that whatever is said and done, that You will have the honor and glory. Lord, we will thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. We are going to be gone in just a moment here, but let me just ask you this. Again, I would not embarrass you for anything in the world, and all our heads are bowed. No one is looking around, just between you and God and me. Maybe you raised your hand and maybe you did not. But wherever you are at today, if you want to know for sure, if you want to know for sure, and we are not going to wait long. My purpose is not to embarrass anybody about anything, but God spoke to your heart today. We need to take time and deal with that. If you are here this morning and you are not sure, you can be sure. If you are a young man, I will have one of my young men. If you are a young lady, you will have one of my young ladies. Take the Word of God and take you in a private place and show you how you can know and settle that question for sure. All you have to do right now, we will not wait long. All you have to do right now, if you want to know for sure, is just to stand up. Every head bowed, every eye closed. If you will stand up, I will have one of my young ladies, one of my young men, and we will come and we will show you how you can be saved. Anybody? Maybe you raised your hand and maybe you did not. I do not know. But if you want to know right now, would you just stand up and we will be done with it.

Father, we do thank You again and praise You. Lord, we do love You. We thank You for our time today. Thank You for all the visitors. We pray, Father, for our upcoming activity that You will just give us a great time there. We pray, Father, that everybody here will come and just have a great time of fellowship. We thank You, Father, for the Word of God. We look forward to Thursday night Bible study and then again next week. Lord, let these people know, if there is anybody here that wants to spend time coming through the Word of God with me, that may help them, I will be glad to help them. We love You and thank You and praise You now. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask You. Amen. God bless you.