

Nehemiah 3:6

Sunday 7/20/2003

SEC: Setting the Tone: Church Practices and Freedom

Let me say this. Now, this is no reflection on Pastor Wayland, who preached last week, because I love him to death. But the bottom line is, when somebody sings up here, if you want to clap when they are done singing, you can clap. I have never understood that. Didn't they read in the Bible where the Bible says the trees clap their hands when Christ comes back? What is the deal here? If trees will clap their hands—trees do not even have hands, they have limbs, but they do not have hands—if a tree can clap its hands when the Lord comes back, you ought to be able to clap your hands when somebody does something for the Lord. I do not care. What is wrong with people today? I am going to tell you what is wrong with them.

Open your Bible. Now that you brought that up, let me tell it to you. I like this place. This place is great. Now, let me just say this: if you want to wear slacks coming to this church, you wear slacks. I know people out there are saying, "Well, you only have to..." Now, that is something else. Do you know why they do not want you to wear slacks to church? They say out of the Bible that you are wearing a man's clothes. No, that is what they say.

Let me just tell you something. Think this through. What is wrong with this picture? In the Bible, every man wore a short, little type skirt. So, if you have a dress on today, according to the Bible, you have on a man's clothes. No, that is insane. I take it for granted you know how to dress. You know your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God. I do not want you feeling that kind of pressure.

From time to time, somebody may come in and say something to you or say something in a message. Just smile, say, "Praise the Lord," and go out and buy yourself a pair of slacks someplace. It is not an issue. I am telling you why: there are more things in Christianity to deal with than that. I just want you to know upfront where we are at with this thing, and I figured you probably did. I think you ought to look nice. If you want to wear a dress, I like my wife wearing a dress. If you do not wear a dress, that is fine. But I do not want anybody seeing somebody else over here saying, "Well, that is the way I should be." Use your common sense. Obviously, spandex is not acceptable. You know that. So, there you are. All right, I feel better about that now.

SEC: Rebuilding the Church: Lessons from Nehemiah

Nehemiah chapter three. As you know, we have been talking here in Nehemiah about how to build a church. The book of Nehemiah is a book in the Old Testament that talks about the nation of Israel in disarray. Nehemiah goes down through there, and he sees the destruction that has happened to Jerusalem, all the carnage, all the desolation, and everything. Jerusalem is in a mess, and all the gates are off their hinges and laying aside, and the rubble is everywhere. He begins to rebuild Jerusalem. He begins to rebuild all of the things and put those gates back on the walls.

Those gates represent opportunities of service. People had to go through those gates to get into the city. They rebuilt the wall. The wall represents you and me; that represents the people in this

church because the wall was only as strong as the individual bricks. Those bricks were overlaid. In other words, they kind of hung on to each other, and in that, that was their strength. Any chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Any wall will be only as strong as its weakest block. And any church will only be as strong as the weakest people that are in it. That is why our job, your job as a New Testament local church, is to take people, train them in the Word of God, to love them, to help them get to the place where they become profitable unto the Lord.

There are nine gates here, and these nine gates represent what this church, the Old Paths Baptist Church, needs to have in it as people flow in and flow out, that they get what God wants them to have. It is an incredible study. Just reading the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, you would never put it all together. But when you start to compare the New Testament principles and you look at the typology and you see how the Bible—everything in the Old Testament, every story—is a New Testament principle about something revealed in a basic, childlike form, you begin to see it.

We talked about, first of all, a couple of weeks ago, the sheep gate. We talked about how the first thing this church needs to understand is the concept of sacrifice. We talked about the second week, the fish gate, and how that is the aspect of this church needing to be a soul-winning church. This church needs to be a church that wins people to Christ, proclaims the gospel, and puts out the Word of God and sees people come to Christ.

SEC: The Old Gate: History and Heritage

Today, I want to begin reading down here in chapter three, verse six, and we are going to talk about the old gate.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We ask you to bless our time in your Word today. We will give you all the honor and praise in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Nehemiah 3:6

Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

Now, the bars that he is talking about are the steel kind, not the drinking kind. There were no, but those kind of bars they set up, but keep it straight here. People will do anything with the Word of God today. The old gate. Now, the old gate represents for you and for me, the history and the heritage that God wants us to have. It is called the old gate.

The Bible says in Proverbs 22:28, it tells a warning. Also in Proverbs 23:10. You can look at it if you want, most of you are familiar with it, but it was given a warning not to remove the ancient landmarks. It says that if they remove the ancient landmarks, you will enter into the fields of the fatherless.

Proverbs 22:28

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

Proverbs 23:10

Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

Now, the fields of the fatherless are you and I not knowing where we come from. If you were an orphan, and from the time you were a baby, your mother, God forbid, puts you on a doorstep someplace, and you grew up not knowing your parents, not knowing your mother, not knowing your father, not knowing where you came from, just knowing that you—that is a traumatic time for somebody because roots are important. We need to be able to look back and see and understand where we came from. It is incredible how somebody going through that will experience all kinds of trauma and spend their whole life trying to search to find a mother who did not care about them, a father who did not care about them. Why? Because it is important for us to have our roots.

In the Bible, God gives us two things, and they are both connected with the old gate, and they are both connected with where we have come from.

1. The first thing God gives us is history.
2. The second thing God gives us is a heritage.

History and heritage are connected with the old gate. History, defined from the Bible standpoint, is where you have come from. You need to know where your roots are. You need to know where you have come from. Heritage in the Bible is defined by what God has done for you along the way. Those two attitudes, those two concepts, are a must for every believer. They are a must for every church.

The Bible says in Proverbs 29:18, "Where no vision is, the people perish." Churches have to have a vision. People have to have a vision. There is no purpose for us to meet together on Sunday morning if we do not know where we are going and what we are doing. How do you know where you are going? You only know where you are going from where you have been, and you only know where you have—when you know where you have been and you know where you are going, it is no problem to find out where you are at.

But we are living in a day and age in Christianity that God's people do not know where they come from. They do not know where they are going, and they certainly do not know where they are at. Yet churches are filled today for what purpose? I am not sure. They go through their song service. They go through their announcements, like we did. They go through their message. People leave and they go right back to their lifestyles, right back to the things out there, and with no purpose, no vision, no understanding, and no goals for themselves in their lives. It is no wonder that Christianity is in such a mess.

What is missing today, and what we must have in this church, is the concept of the old gate. We must understand where we have come from. We must understand where we are and never forget what God has done. I think the greatest example of that in the Bible, in the Old Testament, is the nation of Israel. How many times do you find where God tells them to remember? Over and over

and over He says to them, "Do not forget. Remember, remember what I did. Remember, do not forget when you were here. Do not forget this. Do not forget that. Remember, remember," because the hardest thing for you and for me to do as a Christian is to remember what God has done for you.

Somebody said one time, early on in my ministry, he told me something I never forgot, and he was talking about people, and he said, "You know what? People in your church do not remember what you did for them yesterday. All they want to know is what can you do for me today?" And you know what? We are the same way with God. We are. That is a trait of human nature that does not stop with a pastor. It goes all the way down to our relationship with God. It takes a very rare individual to get past the point in our life where we are looking at what God has done and we remember what God has done because that will get you through whatever you are going through today.

Faith. How many times have I heard a definition of faith? "Well, blind faith. You are just accepting that by faith." Faith in the Bible, true biblical faith, is never just accepting something God said without any proof of anything. Faith only works because you have a history of God coming through for you behind you. You have a daily portion of God in your life today, and you look back in the years, 20 years from now, "God has never failed me. He is not going to fail me tomorrow." That is faith. Faith is built on what God has done, where God is at with you now, that you can face what God is going to do tomorrow: past, present, and future. A vision for this church and for God's people is looking back and seeing and understanding what God has done, recognizing where you are at now, and recognizing where you are going. That is what is wrong in Christianity. That is what is missing.

I look at the nation of Israel. How many times, as I stated, God told them to remember. I look back in the first five books of the Bible. In Exodus, God gives them the law. Moses is up there on Mount Sinai, and he gives him the Ten Commandments and the law of God. Do you know what he does in Deuteronomy? Deuteronomy, do you know what it means? It means "second giving." Do you know what he had to do in Deuteronomy? He had to give them the law again. So they did not hold it true to when God gave it to them. When you go through Exodus, Deuteronomy, and all those first five books of the Bible, you see the great miracles of God that God is doing. And when you come into Joshua, and they have got to go into the land, they are afraid. God has to do almost the exact same miracles in Joshua that he did in the Old Testament up to that point. Why? Because the children of Israel left no heritage for their children of what God did on the wilderness journey for 40 years. That is what is wrong in Christianity. Just as Israel moved into the fields of the fatherless, and that is where they are at today—no history, no heritage—so has New Testament Christianity.

SEC: The Baptist Heritage and Distinctives

Over the last, I do not know, 10 years, I saw a striking thing happen. I somewhat understand it, but from my standpoint from the Bible, I do not understand it. Do you know what I found? I found men who believe the Bible, who preach the Word of God, suddenly want to take the name Baptist off their churches. I see that all the time. Now, I will be the first to tell you that there are

some real idiots out there that call themselves Baptist. I am not going to deny that. But what the problem is, is there is in history, there is a heritage with Baptists, there is a history of Baptists that I want my kids to know about.

I know today you have the Baptists kind of split up into two groups, really three groups, but the one group is very small. You have the idiots on this side who are so legalistic that you cannot do anything. You have them on the other side that are so open that they are letting all the world come in. And then you have a very small few in the middle that walk that balance. That is where this church is going to be, that understand the distinctives of being a Baptist and realize that as a church and as a mom and a dad in a family, you cannot lose the Baptist distinctives that have been there down through history without it affecting your family and your relationship with God and destroying your church.

When you have no history and you have no heritage, this church, as many churches, enters into the fields of the fatherless. Your children will enter into the field. They will grow up not knowing—I mean, they will go to church with you because you make them, or after a while they will not go to church with you—but they will grow up not understanding the great truth that you and I need to never forget: that somebody paid a price for you and me to be here today and preaching the Word of God. Somebody paid a price. Do you know what the tragedy is? Most of God's people do not know who they are.

We take it for granted. Have you ever seen how to spoil your kids to the place that they are ruined? One simple concept: if you want to ruin your kids and you want to spoil your kids to the place where they are rotten, let them grow up and give them things—you do not have to give them everything, just give them the normal things in life—but never teach them what it costs for them to have it. They will grow up thinking that everything in life is free. They will grow up thinking that you owe them a living, the world owes them a living, and it will turn out absolutely rotten, thinking that they will never have a concept of what it costs to have something in life. It is a tragedy.

And you know what? God's people in Christianity are the same way. They have been spoiled. They have been given everything. I mean, you go to churches now, you do not even have to take your Bible anymore. You do not even have to open up a hymnal. Everything is there for it. You can have everything you want. It is like a smorgasbord that everything you want is right there if you want to take it, but there is no price tag on it. Nobody stands up and says, "Hey, look, somebody paid a price for you and I to be here today to understand what God is doing."

I like to watch shows on television that ask people questions about history, life, or whatever. I watch them all the time where they will put them on, and it is amazing to me that there are people out there. I saw this one one time that they asked them about who was Mussolini. This person was probably born in the 60s. They had no idea who Mussolini was. I even heard one did not know who Hitler was. But what happens is, as we move on in life, the school system does not give any reference of history. We grow up to the place in a secular world where all we know is what is around us, and we do not understand the price that was paid.

Let me tell you something. I am not knocking this, but right now we are in a war over there in Iraq that we are not going to win. I am going to tell you why. You heard the young soldiers this week, and my hat is off to them. I am not criticizing them whatsoever. They are heroes in my mind. But what they are, are victims of a society in America that has not given them a value system. You see, when CNN was on there, and they are watching the tanks roll into Baghdad, and the Third ID was blowing everybody up, and they were clipping people out, it was great to be over there. I mean, "Newest correspondent for coming around. What is your name, son? Where are you from? Well, I am from Tobock in New Kentucky." I asked him, I said, "Hi, Mom and Dad, I am over here for freedom." And it was a big thing.

You know what? Now the war really started, and it is a war we are not going to win. This is like the ants and the elephant story. The elephant is big. He is powerful. He is mighty. He can take his trunk and he can pick your car up and throw it a thousand feet, and he can do anything. He can rip walls off, and he can step on your foot and break your bones in your foot and kill you. He is unbelievable. That is America. The ant, just a little thing like that. Ant, just a little bug, walks around with little pinchers. He likes sugar, but he is very well organized. And the old elephant, he gets into the middle of ants, millions and millions of ants. Those ants are millions. You know, ants, they have little colonies. They have little radios. They talk back and forth. They are very organized, very skilled. And the elephant, he is in the middle of battle, and he steps on them, and he kills them by the hundreds of thousands. He can put one foot down and kill 2,000. He is stamping them out all over the place, and he is throwing dirt, rocks, and trees on them. He is killing them by the millions. In the end, the ants win because they overwhelm him, and he cannot stop them all.

See, the war is, it is not glamorous anymore. Now the war digs in. Now these poor guys are out there, and you cannot tell the good guys and the bad guys. Everybody wears a towel, everybody wears a robe, and everybody has an AK-47. Now it is guerrilla warfare, and that is not fun. Now we are seeing the resolve of the American young man and young woman. Now we see if they really are going to fight what they are believing in, or they want to come home.

Let me tell you something. The young men on the Bataan Death March, they did not get home, and they walked down that thing 80 miles. Some of them carrying their intestines in their hands. They go to a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Five long years. I mean, I look at a documentary out there on—it was on this last week—on Wake Island. You probably do not even know what Wake Island was. After the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor, there is a little old atoll out there about 20 miles square called Wake Island with a Marine base, and the Japs hit it the next day. Those poor guys out there, they lasted almost six weeks. I mean, they blew the Jap—I mean, the Japs were overwhelming, and they took them on. There was nobody crying to go home. They knew they were going to be wiped out. Nobody was whining around crying about, "Well, this, that, and that," and badmouthing the country and the generals. When they called on the phone, and they are almost out, and the commanding officer from Hawaii calls the guy on the phone and says, "What do you need? What do we need? What do you need?" Do you know what his answer was? He says, "Send us some more Japs." It is an attitude, boy. He did not say, "Get me out of here, I want to go home."

I am not making fun, I am just telling you there is a difference now in our country. Do you know what that difference is? Back then, in 1945, 43, and 42, they had a vision. They knew what America stood for, and there was something to fight for. We do not know what it is today. I am not blaming the young men over there. I want them to come home too. You say, "You are against the war?" Hey, you know what? If you want to do what is right, you did not have to go over there. You give every piece of weapon we got to the nation of Israel, let them clean house over there, and then we all go home and be with the Lord, and that would be the way to do it. But that is not politically correct. But I know how to win over there if you really want to win. Give it to the Jews, let them do it. They will whip those guys out of there in a week. We can all go to church on Sunday and be over with. That is not going to happen either.

No vision. There is no vision in this country, and it has impacted our young men and young ladies to the place that when the cameras are rolling and CNN is there, and everybody is over there taking pictures, it is okay. But when it is down to the nitty-gritty where men are dying on street corners and we are losing people, we are not going to win. The only thing that gets you through that is a deep-down desire and commitment that you know why you are there and what you are fighting for. It is the same way in Christianity. As long as it is big time, and everybody is happy, and everybody goes along, it is fine. It is when the nitty-gritty comes that you really have got to stand alone for God, that you better have the vision of understanding what you are in this for.

America, politically, militarily, historically, is right in the middle of the fields of the fatherless. Christianity is the same way. We have lost the Baptist distinctives that really have made us what we are. Just like there are people who do not understand who Mussolini is, they do not understand who Adolf Hitler was, or they understand who the first president—I have had a kid that did not know who the first president was. There are Christians today that do not know who George Whitfield was. There are people right now in this city that are in churches here in the Word of God that do not know that the reason they are there is because of a guy named J. Frank Norris. You guys are here because of J. Frank Norris. You are out of that crowd. You do not even know who he was, most of you. Some of you do.

We do not understand that somebody paid a price for you and I to be here, and just like our kids are spoiled because we give them no legacy of what God has done in the family, and we do not sit out and show them what God is doing and how God has brought us from. We take Christianity the same way, and we have people come to church, we sing songs about God, we preach messages about God, we do all the things we are supposed to do, but people leave with no vision because they do not understand where they come from, where they are at, and where they are going. There is no history of God, there is no heritage of God, and we are just like the nation of Israel. We are in the field of the fatherless. You go to church, but for what purpose? You go to work tomorrow for what purpose? To make a living, to get some money? My goodness, my friend, if there is not more in the Christian life than that.

You notice now the rally kitchen, I am preaching a little bit harder now. I kept bumping into that stupid refrigerator the other back, I just could not get around on you, but you are in trouble now, you are in trouble now. We have got over 40 people here today. I dare say they will be down to

25 probably next week, but I am just telling you, you want a church? Here we are. You want me to tell you what you want to hear? Sorry, wrong place. We have got spoiled Christians who do not understand the great concept of what God has done and what has God done in their life and where He brought them from, and they are living their life without understanding the cost.

Back in Acts 11, and this is not a history lesson this morning, we do not have time to go into all that, but in Acts 11, they are first called Christians. From that point on, you can go through history and you read about men, men that God called, men who laid the foundation for you and for me to be here. You have men who, when things were changing, men who were coming along and things were changing, they were starting to say, "Well, you know what, it was not the death on the cross that saves you, you have got to be baptized," or they were introducing all these heresies and all these heretical concepts. There were men that stood up, and they had their little congregations, and they stood up like I am preaching to you, and they said, "That is wrong, we are not going to follow that," and they would not be part of the system. The system got stronger, and the system got bigger, and the system got more popular, and the men would not, because they knew what the Bible said, they had a heritage of God, they knew where they came from, and they knew what God had done, and there was not anybody that was going to change that message that God had given them to preach.

So you have the:

- Montanists
- Novatians
- Historians
- Donatists
- Manichaeans
- Pelagians

All men and all groups called by the man that they followed, who, in the first 300, 400 years of Christianity, were called after a man who stayed on the old path, who would not go the new route, who would not change the great doctrinal truths, who understood the history and the heritage of God, who was going to do his best to give his people and the children and the people that were coming down the line a clear understanding so they would know and have a vision of God in their life. The worst thing for you and for me, for this church, as you as an individual, is to go out tomorrow, go out of here today, and not have a vision of what God wants you to do.

I understand that down through history the method changes. I realize that most Baptists are so—we yell at everybody else for being traditionalists, but let me tell you something, the most traditionalist people in the world are Baptists, and I know Baptists are idiots. For the most part, I know they are. I have been a Baptist all my life, but I am going to tell you something, it has nothing to do with the true line that stand by the Baptist distinctives, that are the fundamental foundations of the Word of God, that have not changed in over 1500 years.

I know the method changes. I know most Baptists cannot deal with change. They do not change the methods, but the method has to change. There are Baptist churches out there that if we do not have a Sunday night service at some point in time, we are going to think we are apostate. Well,

you know what? There is nothing in the Bible about a Sunday night service. We may have one, we may not. We may have it over at your house. We may do something different. In other words, we are going to do what works. We are not going to just cookie-cut ourselves and say, "Okay, you are a Baptist, this is what you are supposed to do." I already told you you did not have to wear dresses. All Baptist ladies have to wear dresses. I already told you you could clap. All Baptists, most Baptists, just cannot clap. Well, in the Bible they clapped. I do not know what to tell you. You only like you to say amen. I mean, I like you to say amen, but you know what? You cannot find one place in the Bible you are ever told to say amen. I will show you a place in the Bible where it says, "Clap your hands." Why do that? Well, I do not care what we do with it, but I am going to tell you this, we are not going to be a cookie-cutter Baptist church. We are going to do what works.

Somebody says, "What do you, where is your Wednesday night?" We do not have Wednesday night service. "Oh, you do not? Well, you cannot be." No, we have a Thursday night Bible study. "Well, you have got to have it on Wednesday." What do you do on Wednesday night? Oh, I watch Fox News a lot and walk the dogs, hit the ball for Tinker, and she runs down and gets it and brings it back. I mean, you know, I do things like that on Wednesday night. "Oh, we have got to be in church on Wednesday night." Well, I mean, where is that in the Bible? You know what? We are going to cut this thing for what works for your life, not get some kind of procedure here that is Baptist, and this is the way it is supposed to be, and then fit everybody into it. This has to work for you, you and your family, and your wife and your husband is the most important thing to get the Word of God in your life the way that it works, not the way that it has done and down through history.

Let me tell you something. In the New Testament, the book of Acts, they did not even meet in buildings. They met in homes. In the New Testament, somebody asked me already, "Well, you have a choir?" Yeah, they are just, we have a singing flea choir that is so small, you cannot see them up here. You know what? Let me just tell you something. We will probably never have a choir. You know why? You are the choir. I am not against choirs. You know, you want to wear a robe for getting to sit in there and sing in the choir. Fine. I have no problem. But I am not going to get caught up in a bunch of things that have nothing to do with the Bible. If you want, we do it fine. We do not do that. The Bible is very clear on the things that we need to do. And I will tell you one of them we need to do: you need to understand the old gate. You need to understand the old gate.

So those early groups up to around three or 400, they are called by a man who they followed in the face of apostasy coming to creep in. When you get into the 500s up through the Dark Ages, around 1500, those groups are called:

- Hasites
- Bogomiles (out of Czechoslovakia)
- Huguenots (out of Germany)
- Albigensians (in South France)
- Waldensians (in northern France)
- Lollards (in North Italy)

- Lombards (in southern Italy)
- Catharii (in South France)

Now, I want you to see something here. Christianity starts really in Acts 11 where they are first called Christians. In the first 400 years or so, as things begin to move out and grow, we see that they are called by small groups, are called by men who are leading those groups. Maybe churches, maybe Bible studies, I do not know. But they are small groups, and they are called after the man they are following. After the time 500 AD and it moves on from there, Christianity has gotten people saved all over Europe. Now they cannot call them by a man's name anymore. They have to call them by the geographical location, whatever country they are in, because they are so big. So they are called Bogomiles from Czechoslovakia, Albigensians in France, Waldensians in France, the Lombards in Italy. Now they are called by a geographical location. For that thousand years, Christianity is spreading. There are men who are preaching and teaching exactly what I am giving you today out of the Bible, even though they are called by these groups.

By 1600, it is all across Europe. It is everywhere. Two lines have clearly formed, which we do not have time to get into this morning. Now they are not called by a man that they are followed. They are not even called by a geographical location. These people now who have all merged together and gotten so big that are standing by the Word of God are in a tremendous bitter battle with the other side. Now they are called by the doctrine that they stand for. They are called Anabaptists, which means "against the baptism," or a literal translation would be "again to be baptized."

Do you know what the issue is? It is doctrinal. Now our organization has come up and said, "You have got to be baptized when you are a baby, and you have got to be sprinkled." And here is a group that says, "No, you do not. The Bible says that you are baptized as an adult once you are saved, and you are immersed." And they said, "Oh, you are saying you have got to be again baptized?" "Yes, that is right." "Well, you are an Anabaptist, are you not?" In time it got so big that they called them Baptist. I do not have time to go into all of the history of it. I am just trying to give you an understanding of the old gate.

But Baptists down through history, Anabaptists, the Bogomiles, the Waldensians, the Lollards, the Lombards, the Catharii, the Albigensians, the Donatists, the Novatians, the Manichaeans, they all had six or seven things that they all believed no matter what you called them.

3. They all believed, first of all, that you are saved alone by the blood of Christ. There is nothing else in this world that can save you except Christ's death on the cross and His shedding of the blood that would save you.
4. They all believed that there are only two ordinances given to the church. One of them was baptism. The other one was the Lord's Supper.
5. The third thing they believed that baptism was only for adults after they were saved.
6. The fourth thing they believed it was by immersion. You go down in the water and come out of the water. Baptism pictures the death, burial, resurrection, buried in likeness of His death, raised in likeness of His resurrection. How many said, "Well, we throw water in your face." Well, when you die, we will throw dirt in your face. You never bury anybody that way. You

bury them by putting them down. It is a picture of Christ dying. You put them down, you bring them up.

7. The fifth thing they believed, they believed that the King James Bible was the absolute perfect Word of God. Because back then there were only two Bibles. One of them was Rome's, and the other one was theirs. And that is this one here. You say it is awfully complicated today. No, it is not. They just made it complicated. It is simpler now than it ever was before.
8. The sixth thing they believed was a separation of church and state. Now you get that all screwed up today because they say, "Well, you know, you cannot do this. You cannot do that." Separated church and state was simply this: Baptists saw what was going on in England, going on in France, going on in Germany. And that is that religions were coming over, and they were state-run religions. They were tied to the states, the Lutherans, the Catholics. They were church-state religions. In other words, when you were born into this state or this country, that is the religion you were. It was a state religion. And they said, "That is wrong. The Bible does not teach that." It had nothing to do with, "Well, you know, you cannot teach evolution." That is a bunch of junk because people want to deny God, do not know where they are at. It had nothing to do with what was taught. It had to do with the fact that a country was set up, the King was a certain religion, and he said, "Everybody born in this country is that religion," and church-state religion. "Everybody is Catholic, everybody is Buddhist, everybody is this, everybody is that, you have no choice." And they said, "No, God gives us a choice. We are not that we want to follow the Bible. We do not want to follow tradition." And that is where all the problems came in.
9. They believed that the Bible was the final authority for all things in faith and practice.

The old gate. In time, as we grow in time, as we have people that we deal with and things that we—all these things we are going to teach you. These are the things that your kids need to know. I know that kids like baseball cards, and I know they are like this and I like that. And they watch TV, and they have their favorite singers and entertainers and all that. I am not saying that—I grew up, my hero was John Wayne, Audie Murphy. I understand how we know who Audie Murphy is. You are all up pretty good. You are ahead of the game. But the real heroes, my friend, are the ones that paid the price for you to be here today. Those are the real heroes. I am just telling you, Old Paths Baptist Church, we never want to forget where we have come from. We never want to forget our history, our heritage. We cannot ever afford to let our kids not know what God is doing in our lives.

SEC: A Pastor's Commitment: Full-Time Ministry

In a lot of ways today, let me tell you something. Today, we are a real church. We have got a real building. We have got a real deal. I want to tell you something else. As of today, you have got your real pastor because God took away my job last week. I do not know what to tell you. I made up my mind that I would work. I told God that I would—I told God that I would put the hours in. I would work around the on-call because I was on call. I mean, I just sweated it out. I paid some gal \$100 to cover my on-call so I could preach to you on Sunday because I could get called out. And you know the devil is going to call me out. I had to drive 100 miles down south someplace

to mark out some line for somebody and miss church. I had to struggle with all that. And I told God I would do whatever I have to do. And I had the most positive attitude my wife knows. Every night I went home and I said, "I am going to make this work. I am going to do it. It is fine. I am not going to complain about it. I am going to do this thing."

And you know what? God said, "No, you are not." In the last month, God put me in the most impossible situation I could ever be in in my life. And come Friday, God shut the door. I tell you, it is a step of faith for us losing your income. But I know this: I know that God did not bring us to this point to leave us hanging. Now, God will bring the people to make them bring them in to do what has got to be done.

Do you know what I am happy about? I will tell you what I am happy about. I am happy I can be at that funeral. Because if I had that job, I could not be there. Do you know what I am happy about? I am happy, but I do not have to worry about being on call for your wedding. So when we have that wedding, somebody calls me with a broken water main down in Podunk, Kansas, someplace. Because I was going to leave it go. I was going to come and do your wedding. Let them drown down in Podunk, Kansas. I do not care. You are my people. I felt as worse as I could feel that I could not be there at the hospital that day when you had your surgery done. I wanted to be. I hated calling you on the phone and just telling you, I wanted to be there. Well, from now on, I will be. I was worried about, "Where is Christian at? Where are you at?" Christian is in heaven. I was worried about your wedding. But I will just do the same thing. Let them drown.

I did not know what else to do. I honest to God, my wife knows. My wife, she is a spiritual genius in my life. I come home, you know, I called her on the phone. I called Jason. I had to talk to him. I had a family meeting and told my family they stood by me 100 percent. I was just, you know, I was just caught in the middle of things. I told my wife, I said, "Well, I will do is I will just, you know, church can pay me so much, and I will just go out and get another job someplace, and I will start looking, and we will be okay." She says, "No, no." She said, "You know what? Why do you not learn?" She says, "God called you the pastor. He took the job away. They are your people. He will provide, Pastor." So you know what? Tomorrow, go to work building this church.

I have a peace about it that I cannot even tell you. I have a peace because of you. I can be there for you. It just tore me up, man. It just tore me up when I could not be there for Nancy, and some of you have other things, and you know, I could not be there for you. I do not know. I will tell you what, you would be driving down the road and seeing my marks go all over the place, man. I would not be able to keep my mind on it. But you know what? Because you are my people. I belong to you, and you belong to me. And we have got to hang in there together. That is what it is all about. And I love you.

My wife and my family were skittish about doing all this because of what we have come through and all those things. But I want to tell you what, they have never—I have never seen them more happy and more perfect peace with the group that we have got. You are without a doubt. You know, they said one time, a guy said one time, he said, "You know, at the end of life," he said, "if you can count your true friends on one hand," he said, "you are lucky." I am more than that

because I know that everybody in this room is my friend. I know that we have been through the fire together, and we will go through anything else. That is a great comfort to me knowing that even as I stand here today, and I am so happy about this building, and I am happy about the fact that I do not have a job anymore, even though God is going to have to—it is a step of faith, but I am happy about it. You know why? Because I know that the first thing for me is to be your pastor. That is where we are at. There will be no more where I do not—I would have to struggle what I am going to do, how I am going to get there to be what I need to be to you. That part of it is solved. So smile, if you die this week, I will be there. Know that I love you guys.

SEC: Corporate Prayer and Dismissal

Now here is what I want to do today. We are going to start doing this every Sunday, but we will do it before I preach. But today I want to wait to know—I want the men to come up and just kneel around this altar. If you do not feel like coming, it is no mark for your not being spiritual, please. I know some people that is not—you can pray right there, but I am just happy. Come up if you would. First of all, let us just ask God and thank Him for the building that He has given us. Let us thank Him for what He has done. Let us just thank Him for what He has done. He has done something immensely great. This place is wonderful.

I want Phil to lead us. I want Jan to pray second. And then I want Chris Fender to close us out. You just ask God and thank God for this building and what God has given us. Go ahead.

[Congregational Prayer]

It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race till we see Christ.

Hey, shake hands with everybody here. Bring somebody to Thursday night Bible study. Bring somebody to church next week. You know where we are at now. I think Thursday night we are meeting down here in another little room, but we will find this. God bless you. I love you so much. You are dismissed.