

What we have here in the Bible is the book of Nehemiah. As you know, we have been in Nehemiah chapter 3, and we have been taking our first series in the Bible. We have only been functioning here as a church about eight weeks, maybe a little longer than that in our home also, but we have been taking a study out of the book of Nehemiah.

I. The Historical Context of Nehemiah

We know that Nehemiah, in an Old Testament sense, represents the going back of the Jew. The time of Israel and its great history has passed. David and Solomon were the apex of the nation of Israel, and because of sin in Israel's life, they went into deep apostasy after Solomon. The kingdom gets split with his sons, and the kings of Israel turned to all kinds of other gods and all kinds of traditions that were not found in the Old Testament law, and Israel is in a mess. They are taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and for a period of time, 70 some years, they are under the captivity of a Gentile nation.

Then suddenly, in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah, they are allowed to go back. Ezra and Nehemiah go back, and in this case, Nehemiah, he goes down and he observes the destruction in Jerusalem, how it lies waste. We have talked about this, and we read it when we started our study. I am just kind of bringing you up to speed here so if you are new here, you understand where we are coming from. He sees the nation of Israel in disarray. The walls that were around Jerusalem that were the defense, the city on the inside, which the walls defended in the gates, they are all knocked off the hinges, they are all in a mess.

II. The Church's Current State and Purpose

We have talked about how that destruction of Jerusalem, even though it happened many, many hundreds of years ago, is a picture in an inspirational sense of where the church is at today. The church has lost its punch, so to speak. The church has lost its ability to reach people. We have a lot of things going on, a lot of things happening, but God is not in most of it. We are seeing today where churches have lost the vision for what God intended them to be.

Someplace along the line, it got screwed up where pastors and churches think that they exist for you to do something for them. That is simply not true, folks. I am not here as a pastor, nor does this church exist for me to ask what you can do for me. This church exists for what it can do for you. I exist for one reason as a pastor: that is to do for you what you need done in your life spiritually, to help you along the way. We have lost that concept.

Because of that, we have looked at these nine gates. Nine being the number of fruit bearing in the Bible, we covered that. We have looked at these nine gates as the openings that you need to have into a church. Nine gates, each one of them, starting with the Sheep Gate, then we looked at the Fish Gate, then we looked at the Old Gate, then we looked at the Valley Gate, then we went through the Dung Gate. Last week we talked about the Fountain Gate. Each one of these gates represents something that this church needs to have in it. As you come through these gates, you

begin to see where the aspects of a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, New Testament church are founded on.

Last week, as I said, we talked about the Fountain Gate, when we looked at the aspect of worship and fellowship. We talked about how that when you get saved, you become a well of deep water, John 4, which in time should spring up that others can drink from, the Fountain Gate.

III. The Water Gate: The Most Important Gate

Today in chapter 3, verse 26, we are going to talk about probably the most important gate. It is certainly the gate that all the other ones really form around, and it is the one that he spends the most time detailing. It will be the Water Gate.

Nehemiah 3:26

Moreover the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto the place over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

Now Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. We love you so much today, and we thank you for the opportunity to open up your word. We thank you for the regular folks that are here today, for the ones that are back, for our new visitors that are here today. We hope Father that today their hearts would be challenged, that they would see the heartbeat of this church. We are not big, we are not flashy. We do not have a lot of things to offer other than the thing that God intended us to offer, and that is the Word of God. My friend, we will offer you the Word of God today. So help us Lord, help us today to open up your book, to preach it truly, to preach it honestly and openly. Lord, may the Holy Spirit of God do the work of His office, to reach down into our hearts, to touch our hearts, to stir our hearts with the things of your word. We will thank you and praise you, in Jesus name, for a sake we ask it. Amen.

I told you when we started here, kind of like an introduction, that the job of this church is to minister to you. Ephesians chapter 4, that great book of Ephesians, where Paul talks about the church, and he really details the church in the chapters that are in that small book. It is loaded with all of the aspects of the church.

Ephesians 4:12

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

He says the reason He gave them was for the perfecting of the saints. That has to start first. The perfecting of the saints. Taking God's people and perfecting them with the Word of God to the place that they are ready for the next step. The perfecting of the faith, the work of the ministry. That is exactly what God is all about. He says for the perfecting of the faith, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. The job of the church is to edify you, to help build you up, to help make you strong.

Now in the process of that, when you are dealing with human beings, you have problems you have to work through. We all get into messes from time to time, and I do not care where you

have been, I do not care what you have done. It does not make any difference to me at all, it does not make any difference to God. All God looks for is where you are at right now and where you want to go from this point on. If that means that you want to embrace the Word of God, that you want to learn more about it, then that is exactly where God wants you to be. That is what the church ought to be doing. It ought to be perfecting you for the work of the ministry and edifying you, not tearing you down. Not bringing you to the point where they have any class distinction as far as, you know, we will give more to this person than we will to this, because we hope this person will give more to us, but this person will not. That is immaterial. You all have something to offer God this morning, and that is why God saved you. You all have some benefit in the ministry, that is why God called you. My job, the job of this church, and the job of each other is to encourage each other, to edify each other, that we can get the work of the ministry done. I have no doubt in God's timing that we will do exactly what God wants us to do here at the Old Paths Baptist Church.

IV. The Importance of Prophecy (Preaching)

He talks about in the book of 1 Corinthians, chapter 14, he talks about spiritual gifts. In that list of spiritual gifts, he named some things, but he says that the number one spiritual gift, or the one that you should look for more than anything else, is prophecy. We think of prophecy, we think of the book of Revelation, and that is true, that is prophecy. But in the Bible, the word prophecy means more than just some future event. It means to preach. It means to take the Word of God, open it up, and to expound it. He says the job of the church, number one should be, and the gift you should desire more than anything else, is to be able to take the Word of God and to preach it and to expound it and to teach somebody else the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 14:3

But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

That is why when you come to the Water Gate, you are looking at the gate that represents the Bible teaching ministry of any church. It is the gate where the water flowed through. As you come here on Sunday morning, you come here on Thursday night, that gate opens up as we open up the book and the water flows, and you get immersed in that water and you grow in that water, and it is an incredible thing.

V. The Profitability of Scripture

The Bible says that the Word of God was given.

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. There are four things that it is profitable for. If you want the Bible in a nutshell, if you want to say, "Well, give me one verse

that gives me an outline of why God gave the Bible for my life,” it is this verse. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. That means that the Bible is different than any other book the world has ever seen. Every other book that is on this planet, man wrote. This book, God wrote. The Bible says all scripture. He is not talking about the original manuscript. You say, “How do you know that?” Because the original manuscripts were not scripture. He is talking about some book. I wonder which one he could be. He is talking about some book that God wrote, that God gave to man, that He gave it by inspiration and is profitable.

What is it profitable for?

1. Doctrine. That is the first thing we talked about a couple of weeks ago. We talked about how this church has to be doctrinally pure. A Christian has to be doctrinally pure. That does not mean that there is not room for different ideas or maybe somebody sees a verse different than this. On Thursday night Bible study when we study the Word of God together, somebody will come up and he will say, “Well, you know, I do not, you know, maybe that verse, I heard what you said and I like that, but have you ever seen this?” Or maybe, hey, let us face it, nobody has got the corner on the market when it comes to the Word of God. I am not under any delusion that God does not show you things and He does not show me and I cannot learn from you. There have been many times that somebody said something to me and it clicked a turn of light on, boy, and I went home and saw something totally different. Of course, you never know about that. I will not tell you that. No, I tell you, I call you up. “Hey, man, you gave me a key that really opened this thing up.” That is the good news. The bad news is I got a great sermon and I am going to wax your tail with it on Sunday morning. See, it is one of those things where God uses everybody. That is the beauty of the local body of Christ. That is the beauty of the local church.

He says it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and then he says for instructions in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. That is a great verse because it says that the Word of God was given by inspiration and is profitable, first of all, for doctrine. You know what doctrine is? I gave you this a couple of weeks ago. Doctrine is what is right in the Bible. Doctrine will show you what is right. It will give you God’s opinion on everything in life that when you read it, you can know what God thinks about it, then you can see what the world says about it, or you can see what somebody else said about it, but you can go to an absolute, inspired Bible that is perfect, and you can read what God said about it and get God’s take on it, and that is called doctrine. Doctrine will show you what is right. That is why he put that down first. Because we as God’s people in the world that we live in, we need to know what is right, because there is a lot of wrong out there.

2. Reproof. The next thing he says, it is profitable for reproof. That is what is wrong. See, the Bible not only shows you what is right, the Bible shows you what is wrong. When you reprove somebody, you show them what is wrong, and you show them what is wrong with their teaching. I told you a couple of weeks ago when we talked about doctrine, that I believe that God will build this church, and I believe that there, when we are talking about the Dung Gate, I said there were eight gates in and one gate out, and that gate out was to take out the refuse, take out the trash. I believe as well as I am standing here, that not everybody that

comes to this church will want to be a part of this church, because some people do not want to do what is right.

I believe that God will use it as a proving ground. I believe that there will be people come in who will say, "Man, this is what I have been looking for, and I need to learn the Word of God, and I have finally found a place where I can learn the Bible at my own speed, that nobody is going to put the hammer on me, and I can have anything I want. This church is here for me, not expecting me to be there for them." But you will find some other people that come in who God will bring them in, and God will expose them the truth. They may have some preconceived idea, they may have some doctrine that they have been taught that is wrong, and God will use that to prove them if they are really open when it comes to the Word of God.

I told you before, the number one philosophy of my life in the Bible and about the Bible is this: I believe the Bible absolutely from cover to cover, including the cover. I believe the Bible is the absolute infallible Word of God, and I have studied it all my life, but I also believe a lot of things about the Bible. I would sit down with you, we would go for a long time talking about what I think about the Bible, but you know what? No matter what I teach you, no matter what I believe, I do not want to believe anything in the Bible that God does not want me to believe. I do not have any doctrine in my life, anything that I believe, that I would not change in five seconds if God showed me clearly, "That is not the way it is." You know why? Because along with doctrine comes reproof. I want what the Bible says, I do not want what Bob Alexander wants to believe. Too many people want to believe something. Too many people today want to believe something in spite of what the Word of God says. So the Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, shows you what is right. For reproof shows you what is wrong.

3. Correction. Then he says for correction. Now he will not just show you what is right and show you what is wrong, now he will show you how to fix it. That is what I love about God. God says, "Bob, that is wrong, or that is right, that is wrong. Now, let me show you how to fix it." You know, that is a stickler for a lot of people. I know people that say that is right and that is wrong, but I do not want to fix it. I will tell you what, that is going to lead you to some problems. I want God to show me from His Word what is right. I want Him to show me what is wrong. Then I want Him to show me what is wrong in my life and show me how to fix it.

Now, I may not like that. I am not going to sit up here and say when I go hear somebody preach or hear one of you guys preach, that I like everything you say. You know why I do not like some of the things you guys say? Because you are right and I am wrong. I am a human just like you, I do not like to be wrong. We are all the same way, and I will tell you what, I used to think of, through the Bible, I had a message one time that I used to preach on marks of spiritual growth, how you could mark your spiritual growth in your life by looking back and say, "Hey, I am making progress in life." It was a great message and I still got it and I will probably preach it to you sometime. But I kind of condensed it. I will tell you the greatest mark to know if you are growing in the Lord or not.

Now, I do not know where you are at in the Lord. I love you no matter where you are at. You may be here this morning and you may not know nothing about the Bible. I love you. You may

be here this morning and know everything about the Bible. I love you. You may be here this morning, maybe somewhere in between and you may want to learn the Bible. Maybe you are sitting here saying, "How did I ever get into this place? I want out of here." I still love you. I do not care. I love you unconditionally. I do. But I want to tell you something. If you ever want to know how you can tell if you have grown spiritually, I will tell you the one test. Just go into somebody preaching and sit down there and let him preach on your, step all over your toes spiritually and hit your pet sins and nail you up one side and down the other and then come out and say to yourself, "I like that. I enjoyed that."

Proverbs 27:7

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

You know what the Bible says in Proverbs chapter 27? It says, "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb, but him that loatheth the honeycomb, the Word of God, even the bitter things are sweet." That is how you can tell if you are coming along or not. I have had people where all my life people did not like me just because of how I preached. Good. I mean, not good that they do not like me. I mean, that I preach good. I mean, that I said things they did not like and they get mad and I never lied to them. That is another thing I told you that before. I cannot understand why people get mad when you tell them the truth. If I lied to you, you get mad. But if I tell you the truth, do not get mad, but people do. You know why? Because this book is the strangest book the world has ever seen. This book will make you or break you. This book is profitable for you. So when it gets into the Water Gate, and we have not even got there yet. I am not, we may have to break this down into two weeks of messages. I do not know. But when you look at this Water Gate, it is an incredible thing. It is why everything flows from that. So not only is the Word of God given by inspiration that is profitable for doctrine and reproof, it is profitable for correction. It tells you how to fix it.

You know why God ordained preaching? You know why he says that prophesying preaching is the best thing over all the other gifts? I will tell you why. You know what happens when you come to church on Sunday morning? Here is what happens. You go all week long. Very few of us all week long stay right with God all week long. You know what a thing comes into your life. Come on. You know what you do. I know what they do in my life. We do not always do things that are right. Sometimes when you show up on Sunday morning, you have not taken care of business the way you should have.

The Bible says this:

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanses us from all sin. When you sin on a daily basis, say you go back to, you go out of here today and you are all excited and you are fired up and tomorrow something happens. You know, some lady pulls out in front of you, some guy pulls out in front of you, and you, you know, or something goes bad at work or that favorite person at

work and irks you the wrong way, you know, or I do not know, whatever the case may be. You know, by one o'clock, two o'clock in the afternoon, you have blown it. You know what? At that point in your life, you ought to stop and say, "God, I am sorry. I love you. You mean more to me than everything in the world. I do not want anything to come between me and you because I know that I have to walk in the light as you are in the light to have fellowship with you." We talked about that last week. So therefore I am stopping right now and I am confessing it. I should not have got mad at that woman. I should not have shot her in both legs and left her alongside the road. I should not have beat that guy up or I should not have let that guy beat me up. However it went down, I am sorry, Lord. Forgive me and fellowship is restored.

But you know what? We do not do that all the time. You ought to. The goal of your life ought to be able to get to that place where you do. So you show up and I tell you, and God is your heavenly father and you are his child. I have raised kids. You know how to raise kids, do not you? You want to have fellowship with your kids. But when the kids do not do right and you say, "Honey, do not do that." And they say, "Okay, Daddy, I am sorry. I will not do it anymore." Well, good. Good girl. Good boy. Everything is fine. You know what happens. You know how kids are. Kids are like you. They got an old sin nature. "Honey, do not do that." "Why do not you do it?" "I know, but honey, you just do not want to do that. You are going to get hurt." "I am not going to get hurt." "You are in the middle of the road. There is a cement truck coming down the road. In about 15 seconds, you are going to change your philosophy of life. Now you can either come over here or you and Daddy are going to go in the room and we are going to talk about a career change for you. What do you want to do?"

You know what happens if they consistently, consistently, and I know what mothers do. Mothers are the sweetest thing in the world. But they will say, "I am not going to tell you again." Kids says, "Oh yeah, you are good for seven." "I am not going to tell you again." "And I am counting them right now. We are only on four. I got to do what I want for three more." "I am not going to tell you again." And then I will listen. They know how to figure it out. Is not that what we do with God? Sure it is. God taps you on the shoulder and you say, "Okay, all right. Let me just let me hang in here for a little longer. I know I got to get right, but let me stay with it for a little while." Oh, that is the same. What do you think your kids learned it from? You think they just learned it because they learned it? They learned it from us. You learn to tell your kid one time, "Do not do that." Kid says, "Yes, sir. Yes, ma'am." We are making progress. When you do not, you know how it goes? When it prolongs goes, you have to give them a spanking. We have not had to give Maddie a spanking yet. She is probably going to be the most perfect kid that ever lived because, but she will not have to. Well, that is going to be a bad day when we have to spank Maddie. Maybe the kids already have. I do not know. She is, I do not know how, but anyway, but it is going to come a day when she, I mean, she is the sweetest thing in the world. I mean, she loves her grandpa, you know, we go every place together. You know, and I am up there and she smiles. She looks for me. They say Barb watches her two days a week. Well, Jamie works, you know, and they bring her up in the morning. She says, "Papa, Papa," what does he Papa? Then when she gets there, she does not want anything to do with me. But anyway, that is just, but one of these days, oh, it is going to be tough, man. I am not doing it. No, no, I teach the Bible to my kids. They have to handle all the other stuff.

Well, I cannot even, I cannot even get mad at my labs. I got three labs. I got a black one. I got a brown one and I got a yellow one. Shem, Ham, Japheth. I do not want to tell you. I will come down the steps, you know, I am going to put a little video camera down there sometime because while I am upstairs, they get one of them or all of them. I do not know. They get the paper out and they just out of the pens and he just, I mean, I can shred it everywhere. I know they are not reading it. They are just ripping from one end to the other. Then when they hear me come down the steps, I walk around and say, "What is this? What happened?" And they are all, the yellow one, she is on the couch going, she is looking at me. "I have been here the whole time," you know, the black one, she is laying over here, you know, just saying, "Dad, I am the oldest and I do not believe they are doing what they are doing, but you know, I am here." And the brown, he is the biggest 110 pounds, big old baby. Call him Buddy. He is sitting over here and he is dumber than the other two. The other two put on a great act, not Buddy, Buddy sitting over there with a sheepish grin on sheep. He is looking at his face, coddling down. If that was not all, there is a piece of newspaper hanging out the side of his mouth. Now what is this picture all about? How many times in life I have been caught with a piece of newspaper hanging out of my mouth with God? We say, "Oh God, it was not me." God says, "Yeah, it was you. How do you know?" "Of course you got a piece of newspaper hanging out of your mouth." That is the mark, man. You want to find out how you are growing spiritually? I will tell you. How good can you take it today? When you walk out of here and you are saying, "Oh man, that was good. That was good."

We do not like pain, do we? No, we do not. We do not. Society does not. You know what? It is hard to, when something hurts, it is hard to say it feels good. It feels good. You know, we had to praise God for everything. But it is tough too. I am not like that. I used to take the black dog and she likes to run. I used to jog, I told you, dog, I do not take her anymore. I used to run. I would run up around the school, you know, and she would run with me and we would get a good pace going. I would have a fun time. She would bounce up in the air. She was just happy to be with me. I will never forget one time. I always try to praise God for everything. I do. Even the bad things. I mean, I just say, "Lord, you know what you are doing." But it is okay when it does not really hurt. But if it really hurts, it is tough. I mean, you hit yourself with a hammer. I mean, not too many people say, "Praise God from whom all throbbing throw." I mean, and we are running along up there. We are coming out of the track. And, you know, I am having a good time. You know, we are bouncing around. She likes balls. She has chased balls all the time. I mean, she will die in her tracks chasing a tennis ball. I have to keep her away from the baseball field. They knocked one over the fence one time and she got the baseball. I would not give it back to the guys. I mean, she is gone with it, man. I see this orange ball here. And I am saying, "Oh, this is going to be fun." So I am running along and I snapped her because I am going to kick this little orange ball. Some kid left up here and she will go chase it and we will play it for a while. We are running along and I am getting the side on it now because I am going to come in and I kicked that thing with my hand and somebody had left a shot put on the field. It was not what I thought it was. I am not kidding you. I am a mile from home. Now if I had had Buddy, I would have just saddled him up and had him drag me home. But Tinker is not going to do that. So I am in our scene. She still wants to run. She does not understand. His foot is hurt. He has got a limp. No, no, no, no. He ran here. Let us run home. I am all the way down there and I am trying to get the best out of this. I mean, I am just saying, "Lord, thank you for this." Yeah, right. Sure. "Yeah, thank

you, Lord. Can we do it again?" You know, I mean, it hurts. It is tough to thank God when it hurts, is not it? It really is. But the mark for you and for me of growing spiritually, I am going to tell you what it is. You do not have to go pay somebody \$1,000 to do a spiritual chart on you. Give me half the money and I will just give you one verse. The bitter things are sweet. Do you love it when the book comes all over you?

See, that comes from realizing that the scripture was given by God. The reason why God chose to do it that way, because just like your child, if you do not do what is right, if you do not do what is right, and you do not do what is right, sooner or later God is going to come down and say, "Okay, let us go down to the woodshed and we are going to have a talk." And God is going to whip you. That is why God said, "Confess your sin." Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. That is why God said, "All right, if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and all those things." He talked about the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son will cleanse us from all sin. We can do all those things. But if you do not do it in time, God deals with you on His own.

Now the reason why God has a church, so that intermediate phase. You go all week long and maybe you show up this morning, you got some things in your life. Scripture is profitable. Why you are here today, I do not know what it is. I do not care what it is, but you know what, you know what it is. Right now God showed you doctrine. God showed you what is right in your life. Now the other side has come up, I may not even preach on it, but God showed you what is wrong. Now I have told you, you can correct it. Ooh, now you have got a decision. You see, the reason why God has had the church for edification, for preaching. So when you come in here this morning, maybe you are not where you need to be. You will hear some good hard preaching. You will take it to heart. You will deal with your sin. By doing that, God will not have to come down and deal with it. You will take care of yourself. That is what it is all about. The church is everything you need. The Bible is everything you need. It shows you what is right. It shows you what is wrong. It is for correction. It will show you how to fix it.

4. Instruction in Righteousness. Then he says, for instructions in righteousness, you know what the next thing it does? It shows you how to keep it right. It is incredible. It is incredible. You have everything you need in that book to get you through everything in life. My job, the job of this church, is to help you dig it out, is to help you apply it, is to help you.

Most guys do not dress well. Some guys do. Some guys can go to a thing and they walk out and they are immaculate. Man, I think a plaid blazer with striped pants and a polka-dotted tie is great. You see? Well, you are laughing at Jimmy. Look at you this morning. But you know what? When I buy clothes, I take my wife with me because she really picks them out. I mean, I ask her even when I am coming to church. I say, "Is this tie?" Because I think all ties go. I thought they just had to be long. Some ties do not go good with other things. My wife will say, "Why do not you wear this tie?" She is being nice by saying, "You do not want to wear that today." She helps you pick out the clothes. My daughters can do that. My daughters can take some place and I do not know. Styles change. I do not know how styles go. I do not. Sometimes they wear their shirts in and then they wear them out. Sometimes I have never gotten why you want to wear your pants down to here. I have never figured that out. More than the why is how do you keep them from

coming all the way down. That is what I want to know. I am not forgetting. But you know, trends come, trends go. I learned a long time ago, if you keep your suits long enough, they will come back in style. Just stay with it. But most women, most men do not know how to dress and most women know how to dress them.

You know what? That is all it is with the Word of God. You are here this morning and maybe you do not understand everything about the Bible. You do not know how to apply it all. Hey, that is what we are here for. We will help you put it on, right? We will tell you what matches. We will tell you what goes and what does not go. You have a personality and your personality is different than the person sitting to you. Now, obviously the Bible is for everybody and it has these things that fit into everybody. You know what? Everybody is different. That does not mean the Bible applies to one person, not to somebody else, but it means that within who you are, you may have different problems than somebody else. You may have different needs. What this guy needs, maybe you do not need. You know what you need? Maybe this person does not need. To go to a church where they just kind of blast you, you know, with all the Bible, you know, and then you go home and nobody ever is there for you and you know, "Do not bother me, I am busy," you know, and all that stuff. Hey, that is not what you need. The church exists. This Water Gate is here. This Water Gate exists for one reason and that is that you can get what you need and match it to your soul, match it to your personality, breathe in everything that you want in your life and God can get everything out for the ministry, for the work of God that you can perfect yourself on a daily basis. That is why we are here. That is why we are here. The Scripture was given for that purpose. It was given by inspiration of God and it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

VI. Furnishing the Temple of God

2 Timothy 3:17

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, not finished, furnished. You know why? The Holy Spirit of God lives inside you. We have talked about it before. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. If you go back to the Old Testament and see the literal temple where the priest did the work, there were some furnishings in there. The high priest is living inside your temple and he wants to do some work and you have to provide the furnishings. Go back and see it sometime. There were the candlesticks. It had seven candlesticks. We talked about it the other night. The Bible said there are seven personalities of the Spirit of God, or the seven functions of the Holy Spirit of God. We talked about it the other week. There was bread in there and that bread was lined out in one, two, three, four, five, six and then one, two, three, four, five, six. I mean that bread is a picture of the Word of God. That priest went in there every morning. He ate of that bread. There was no other light in there. It was completely dark. There was no other light in there except that candlestick. That minister, that priest had to do all of the work by that light. You know what? If he got in the way of the light, he could not see what he was doing. When you get in the way of the light of God inside your temple, you do not know what you are doing. There are furnishings in there. Six, six, six, six, six, six, loaves of bread, six loaves of bread, 66

books. You will beat it. I am a priest, Hebrews, the book of Hebrews says. Not in the Old Testament sense. I am a priest after the order of Melchizedek. I am an eternal priest. The day I got saved, I became a priest. In this temple, the high priest wants to do a work. When you take the Word of God through the Water Gate, you build your life, you go to church, you exercise your spiritual gifts. God takes you. He trains you. You work through your problems. There is somebody there to help you. There is somebody there that gives you everything that you need. You recognize the Word of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, not sinlessly perfect, perfect under the work of God. Perfect. Thoroughly furnished, not thoroughly, truly from the inside out, not from the outside in. Thoroughly furnished. It starts inside your soul and works its way out. Thoroughly furnished unto all good works that the man of God may be, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The work of God in your life takes place inside Jesus' temple, just like it did in the Old Testament in a literal temple. The high priest lives inside you, the Holy Spirit of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as there were furnishings back there, you build those furnishings in your life by what you do with the Word of God.

Today, I look around here and I love you all. But you know what? There are people here, and not because you are a bad person, but there are people here that are in different stages of furnishing that temple. Where do you find that in any church? There is somebody in here that you have got the furnishings in, you are going man, you are perfected and you are understanding it is a daily process, but you are in the work of the ministry. You are witnessing people, you take care of your families, you study the Bible, you know the Bible, and you are out there ministering to other people. Some are in the middle of that, and you are just trying to get it together. Some, maybe this is the first time you ever heard this in your life and you say, "Oh, I really want a relationship with God, how do I do it?" You start by building those furnishings on the inside. You do not have to run out and buy a book, you do not have to go to somebody's seminar, you just find your church and understand what it ought to be doing that will take the time to be there, no pressure. Somebody is saying, "Well, you should be further along here, what is your problem here, what is your deal?" No, you go at your own pace. I promise you, you start doing what is right with God and the Word of God and God will take care of itself. I do not have to supervise your spiritual growth, it will take care of itself because the Word of God is put together that way. When you get to the Water Gate and the Water Gate charts the flow, let me tell you something, it is an incredible thing.

VII. The Personality of the Church

You know churches, not only do people have personalities, but churches have personalities. People have personalities based on when they are born and they are raised and they grow up in life and the events that happen to them in their life, it forms their personalities. Child psychologists say that by the time a child is two or three years old, his personality is pretty well all complete, the rest of it is just going to reveal itself. That is why the Bible says to train up a child in the way you should go, train him up. You raise rabbits, you raise chickens, you train children. You raise corn, you raise peas, beans, watermelon, you train children. The time they are infants you train them in the way they should go. That is how you do it. Well, that is how you do

it here. That child's personality begins to develop. The best time to start with a young Christian is when they get saved. You start to take them and to work with them and to train them and work through whatever. Now sometimes that, you know, perfect world, that is the way it should be. It is not a perfect world. Sometimes you get them to come in and they got a lot of baggage. Sometimes they have had some tragedy in their lives. Been through a divorce, been through some problems, been through this, been through that. I do not care. God does not care. God wants to know what you want to do from this point on. That is all. You say, "Well, I have got all these suitcases." No problem. We will open them up one at a time. We will throw out what is not any good. We will keep what is good. We will go from there. That is all there is to it. That is the job of the church.

As you do that, the church builds its personalities. You go over to the book of Revelation. There are seven churches. Now I know they represent seven periods of church history. Certainly they do. But in an application, in a spiritual sense, I also believe they represent the seven personalities that churches can have. I know that churches have personalities. You have some that, you know, they cater to the rich folks. They do not care where you are at. As long as you cannot do something for them, they do not want anything to do with you. Yeah, you can come. But we are going to focus on these people. You have some that have great crowds of people. But the guy that gets up, he never says anything. He gets his sermons off the internet. He is too busy playing golf out there on the week to spend any time in the Word of God. Maybe he does not even believe the Word of God. So he gets his someplace else. The people come and they come and they come and they starve to death. But because he has got such a, you know, such a scotch, got all of the bells and whistles, man, that people are looking for today, people just keep flocking in. But they do not stay. They are just, I mean, it looks good on the outside, but when you really get into examine, they are just passing through. They go on to a next show. My old friend of mine one time, we went to a church, a big old church. It was not over here. He is an old war horse. He led in there and he says, "My goodness." He says, "There is not a tent big enough in this city to put this circus under." That is the way it is. That is the way it is. Those are the kind of personalities churches take on. Whatever personality the church is will be the personality of the people. Shallow churches produce shallow people. Churches that do not know how to deal with problems will produce people that do not know how to deal with problems. Sometimes they do not want to deal with problems.

I am telling you, this church's personality has to be one where the book is everything. The Word of God is everything. We understand the personality of this church is that you are not here for us. You are not here for me. This church exists for one reason. I exist as pastor for one reason. That is for you. Whatever you need. When somebody dies, I am there to bury you. When somebody gets married, I am there to marry you. When somebody has a trial in their life, I am there. When somebody says, "I just want to follow, I just need to learn the Bible," I am there. It is not, "Well, yes. Well, just let me give you something to read here and you go and you just go read this and then you know, you will be fine." No, no, that is not what you need. You need somebody to sit down and make a vested interest in your life. Someone that will take the Word of God, sit down with you and give you whatever you need and work through the Word of God to help you come to the place that your personality gets molded and shaped and formed, that you become the man

that God wants you to be, that you become the woman that God wants you to be. In all of those things, you are perfected under all good works for the work and the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

You say, "What is the end result?" The end result is then you take what you have got and you give it to somebody else. This church will never grow because people come by this, some of the guys said, "We need to get a sign up front." I am not against that. I mean, get a sign that says Old Paths Baptist Church, Jeremiah chapter 6, you know, and all this thing, you know, come here, the greatest preacher ever lived. I do not care what he put on it. But let me tell you something. That is not going to build this church. Not going to build this church. People are not going to get stopped. You are not going to be driving down the road going to the golf thing and saying, "Oh, Old Paths Baptist Church, we are going to miss it. Let us turn around." No, it is not going to happen. It is not going to happen. It is going to happen because this church becomes a personality. There are people in here, no other people that you love, that you care about. That is where it starts. It is you know what you have got. You see somebody out there that maybe does not have it. That is a good person and got some great qualities. You just say, "You know what?" Or maybe they are just looking for a church and you just use what God has given you. That is how it is going to go because people care about people. That is the personality this church needs to be. It is going to come because of the fact that we are that we are that we have a common mind and a personality is a oneness. Everybody thinks, "Well, you know, my job is this and my job." No, no, the job of everybody in here is one fold.

I used to do a little thing when I preached. I used to do a lot of motivational stuff for churches, you know, and preach a lot of different places. I would always tell them and I get preaching about the church. I would always use this little example. I would always say, "Okay, we are going to pretend right now that we are a firehouse and that we are all firemen and I am the chief and everybody is going to have their job." I would come around and say, "You are going to drive the truck. You are going to make sure the hoses are all in the truck. That is your job. Okay, you are going to make sure that we got water in the fire truck. Okay, you are going to pass out the hats. Make sure everybody has got one. You know what we are going to do with you. All right. You are going to you are going to run the ladder that goes up." "Okay, now we are a firehouse. And we are all firemen. Let us make sure everybody has got their job." I go down and I do that to a crowd. I go down and I say, "We do not have to do it now. Now, what is your job?" And you say driving a truck. I say, "What is your job?" You say the hoses. I say, "What is your job?" And you say, "Yeah, what is your job?" And pass out the hats. "What is your job?" "You are going to run the ladder up." And I say, "No, that is not your job. Our job is to put out fires." See that thing? That is our job. But we get so busy doing our own thing that we forget that we exist here as a team for each other. Like the hat, I will pass them out. We exist for each other. That is why we are here. You all may have jobs. That is fine. But understand that the real job is building a church, reaching people, touching their lives, putting out fires.

Now, that is what the Water Gate does for you. The Water Gate is a gate that the water flows through. The Water Gate is a gate that we take. We bring in here the teaching ministry of this church, the Word of God in this church, and the way it is presented, the way it is taught, the way

it is given out. It molds and shapes the personality of this church, that this church stays as doctrinally pure as it can. It stays right on top of things the way that it should, and it built around the aspect. It goes after the greatest thing that God ever wanted us to go after. That is truth. That truth is put out to people, and people can take it or they can leave it. The ones that want to grow, hey, we will do everything we can. The ones that do not want to grow, we will still love them. We will still pray for them. We will still say, "Anytime you want to do what the Word of God says, we are here." Unconditional love, unconditional giving, unconditional teaching of the Word of God. The Water Gate, the Water Gate, all scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

- Doctrine: doing what is right
- Reproof: knowing what is wrong
- Correction: knowing how to fix what is wrong
- Instruction in Righteousness: knowing how to keep it perfect

That the man of God may be perfect, truly furnished unto all good works. That is our job. It is loving each other, loving others, bringing them in, helping them understand what the Word of God has for them, helping them realize what they have got in the Word of God. We are going to talk about that next week. We did not even get into this thing to any depth. We are just, this is the introduction one on one. I told you about the Water Gate today. We are going to look at the Water Gate next week. We are going to see the aspects of it. But that is what it is all about.

I thank God for the men and women that are in this ministry. I do. I tell you, God just keep bringing great people around us and into us. We get visitors every time. You know, we just, God is on the way of doing some great things. It did not cause me, it did not cause you, because of this book and the attitude we have about it. I am going to tell you something. This book, I can stand as a living testimony as many as you can. This book will be there for you when nobody or anything else is. This book will get you through when nothing else will get you through. It is worthy and worthy and worthy of you investing the rest of your life in it. Because when all is said and done, when all your friends leave you, when everything in your world is upside down, it is the one stable thing that will never change. It is the absolute final authority. It is God's opinion on everything. It is fixed and it is inspired and it is given to you and it will get you through every tough thing in life. I am telling you, and this church needs to have, continue to have a Bible preaching, Bible teaching ministry, the Water Gate, the Water Gate. Let us pray. Father.