

Nehemiah 3:14

Sunday 8/3/2003

As you know, we have a book in the Old Testament. The Old Testament really didn't have churches in the Old Testament. But if you know your Bible, you know that the Bible is set up in such a way that the Old Testament teaches a lot of things about the New Testament. That's why in the New Testament you have all the stories that you have. The New Testament is basically built on stories, and those stories represent New Testament principles that are in picture form. That's how God designed it, that we could learn the Bible.

So when you come to the book of Nehemiah, you have a great picture here of how to build a church. Jerusalem was the center of activity in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the center of activity is the local church. Nehemiah goes down and he views the destruction of Jerusalem. During this time, the nation of Israel is in great disarray. He goes down and he sees that all of the things are torn up, the walls are torn down, all of the gates are knocked off, and it's just in a mess.

It really typifies for us, as we view Christianity today, the carnage and the destitute state that Christianity is in. Nehemiah and some men go down and they decide to rebuild the walls and rebuild the gates. Those gates, as we've talked about, represent—in fact, there are nine of them. We know that nine in the Bible is a number of fruit bearing. Those nine gates represent the nine avenues that this church needs to have to reach people. These gates are on the wall; they go into the city, and each one of them represents something.

The first one we talked about a couple of weeks ago was the Sheep Gate. We talked about how it's a picture of sacrifice and how this church needs to learn the concept of sacrifice. The next week we looked at the Fish Gate, and we know that Jesus taught us to be fishers of men. We talked about the aspect that this church needs to be a soul-winning church.

Then the next week we talked about the Old Gate, and we talked about how this church needs to really keep a heritage of the history of why we are who we are and what God has done. We talked about that aspect. Last week we talked about the Valley Gate. The Valley Gate was a place of compassion. We talked about how this church has to meet the needs of people when they come in, because not everybody is going to come in just looking for a church and wanting to be involved in church. Some are going in with a lot of severe problems. The world never leaves anybody better than it finds them, and we want to be able to meet people's needs on whatever level they are at.

I. The Dung Gate

Today we are going to talk about the next gate that is found in Nehemiah 3:14. I must confess, this gate is kind of tough to preach about because it is the Dung Gate. Being a regular Baptist, I can deal with this.

Nehemiah 3:14

But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

Now, Father, we thank You and praise You for all You do for us. We look at this gate today, Father, and we know that it is important. We ask You, Father, to help us understand, Lord, how it applies to our church, how it applies to Christianity. We will thank You for all You are going to do today. Again, we pray for Jan this morning and for the others, Lord, that may be ill and not here today. We pray that You will bless them. Lord, for the ones that are here today, that You will open up the Word of God, that You will give us insight and wisdom, and that, Father, we will have all that we need to have today as we go home from Your Word. Lord, this looks like a weird situation here, but within these scriptures, within the confines of the Word of God, what a great teaching is here for us to see today as the body of Christ. Help us, Father. We will thank You and praise You in all You do, in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

There are nine gates here, and the thing that I want you to see about the Dung Gate is that it is different than all the rest of them, because all the other gates are used for people to go in. This gate is used for something to go out. It is a gate to take out the trash, so to speak. All of the waste material of the city was taken out the Dung Gate. The Dung Gate is on the south end, and it goes down into Gehenna, which Christ likened to hell in the Gospels. It was a constantly burning place, like a garbage dump where the garbage was burned and the trash was burned, and all of the other things that were taken out of the city. Just like the dump truck comes around to your neighborhood and picks up your trash and takes it to a dump someplace. I don't think they burn anymore; they just bury it now, and then later they build houses on it, and then you wonder why your house sinks into the ground. But back then, they took it down and they burned it. That fire was constantly burning out there in that dump, and all the trash coming out the Dung Gate was taken down there and it was burned down there. This is the only gate of all nine of them that nobody ever went in, but this gate exists for something to come out, and that's very important.

II. The Body Analogy: Physical and Spiritual

When you look at our human body, the way God designed it, it's marvelously made. Anybody who has any kind of sense at all, I don't know how they could ever believe in evolution once you saw your body and realized about the body. The body is the most unbelievable, remarkable creation that God ever created. The way it's put together, the way it functions, it's just incredible. Anybody who could see it could understand that there's something special about the creation of man and woman as God made them.

There are three things that are characteristic of our bodies:

1. Our bodies are self-propagating. That means we have the ability within ourselves to create life through having children.
2. Our bodies are self-maintaining. That means that if you get a cold, your body starts to fight that cold. If you cut your finger, your body heals itself. Within limits, without having major surgery, your body will repair itself and will take care of itself.

3. Your body is also self-cleaning. There's a process that God has built into your body, a biological process, by which the impure elements, the waste material that your body doesn't need, are discarded.

When you look at it, especially when you go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12, you'll find in that great chapter where the human body is likened to the body of Christ. He talks about the hand, he talks about the feet, he talks about all the aspects of a physical body, and he likens them to the body of Christ because your body is coordinated. Your body works together. Your hand is coordinated with your feet, and your eyes are coordinated with your head, and all of those things. You send electrical impulses from the brain to your body, and it moves and it does everything in coordination. That's exactly what the body of Christ should be. That's exactly what he's talking about. So in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, he uses that great analogy, and that is the key chapter in the New Testament that talks about the human body and its relationship to Christ's body, the church.

Christ's church also has those three applications:

4. Christ's church is self-propagating. It has within itself the ability to create life, and you do that by sitting down with somebody that's a sinner, opening up the Word of God, showing them what the Word of God says, and then giving them the life in Christ by leading them to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit of God coming inside and saving them, and you produce life.
5. It also has the ability to be self-maintaining because the church is a self-governing organization. It has within itself the ability to solve problems, to heal anything that comes in, whatever happens in your life, whether it's a death of a loved one or maybe some personal struggles in your life, trouble with your kids, trouble in your marriage, trouble in your own personal life, whatever it is. The church, just like your body, has the ability to solve and to heal those kinds of problems.
6. The church also has an ability to clean itself. It has an automatic self-cleansing process, just like the body does, that eliminates the things in it that will harm your body. If you didn't have a process in your physical body to eliminate the waste, you'd really be in trouble. Of course, it's done through your kidneys and through other portions of your body. You know that a person that has malfunctioning kidneys, they have to go on a dialysis machine. If they don't go on that machine, real severe problems take place. Your body is designed in all those three areas, and the body of Christ is designed in those same three areas in a spiritual sense, just like your body is in a physical sense.

III. The Cleansing Power of the Word

There's one element that is key in both situations that is vital in the cleansing process of your body. This element has to be there, and it is a key ingredient for the cleansing of your body and for the cleaning out of your body and really getting rid of the waste and the things in your body that will cause you problems. In both cases, in a physical sense and in a spiritual sense, it's water. Water is the key. You have to drink water. Water flushes out your system. Water gets all the impurities out of your system. Water is something in a physical sense that you have to drink.

There's no substitute for water. When God designed water, He designed it as the number one, outside of air, the number one crucial thing that we have to have to keep our bodies working and thriving.

Because water in the Bible is a type of the Word of God. In a spiritual sense, it's the washing of the water by the Word, as the Bible talks about.

Ephesians 5:26

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Water in the Bible is a type of the Word of God. In your physical body, you have to drink water to eliminate the waste and get the cleansing effect in your body. In a spiritual body, you have to have the water, the Word of God, that keeps you clean. He talks about in Titus chapter 3, verse 5, about somebody getting saved.

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

So water is the key. Water is the key. This gate is called the Dung Gate, and this gate is where the trash and everything that was unclean was hauled outside that city, because if it stayed in the city, it would corrupt the city to the place where disease would be overrun, garbage would pile up, all kinds of social problems would take place because of the uncleanliness of the city. The body of Christ is the same way. Just as your human body has to have water to clean itself and to purge itself and to keep itself clean, the spiritual body of Christ has to have water, and that is what keeps this church pure.

IV. The Reality of Church Problems

I'm sad to say this: we want to build a church, and I'm excited about it. Every week, God brings us new people, and we see exciting situations. Our Bible studies have just been great, and our Sunday morning services have just been great, and all of that. But I want to tell you, I also understand this: as much as I want to build a church, and you want to build a church, and we have committed under the Word of God to build a church, I know this. I know it's only a matter of time before we have some problems in our church, simply because of this: this church will not be for everybody. No church is for everybody.

I want you to know, right now it's great. My wife and I were talking about it the other day. My kids talk about it all the time. Everybody we've got here is incredible. Everybody does their share. Everybody is just wonderful. The people, even our visitors, God has just given us some incredible new people and everybody that shows up. But I'm not under the delusion. I've been in the ministry many, many years, and I know this: I know that there are people that are saved people whose problem is with the Word of God. I know that no matter how you start to build a church, or how you do, or what you do, or how you try to do it as good as you can do it, I know that there's going to be times come that people are going to rebel toward the Word of God, and

that causes problems in churches. I've seen it where two or three people would keep a whole church from really doing anything for God because of their bad attitude.

God doesn't intend it to be that way at all. God wants this church and every church that preaches the Bible, that believes the Word of God, God wants those churches to flourish. God brings men and women in that they can learn. God brings people in so they can find out how to raise their families and build their marriages and build their individual lives. But at the same time, and that's what the gates are for, there are nine gates, and eight of them allow you to come in, but one of them allows you to leave. That is a crucial concept that you and I need to understand.

V. Understanding Sin: David vs. Saul

For just a moment here, I want to talk to you about understanding sin in our lives. Sin is something we all have to deal with. We're all sinners. Even after you're saved, we still make mistakes. Of course, the Christian life and the Word of God and your relationship with God are given that you make fewer and fewer mistakes, and you learn by your mistakes, and in time you can perfect yourself in the Word of God to the place that you're never going to be sinless, but you're going to be more like Christ, and you're going to see things in this life like Christ, and therefore you're not going to want to do some of the things that cause you problems and heartaches in your life. You look back at your life and you see how dumb some of that was, and we all look back and we all could give our testimonies this morning about things like that. But I want to talk to you about understanding sin.

Two great men in the Bible represent this: one of them is David, the other one is Saul. Both men sin, but God kills one man who He shouldn't have killed, and He doesn't kill the man that He should have killed. When you stand back and you look at that scenario, you think to yourself, "What is going on here?" It helps you understand how God views sin. Now, what I'm about to say is not a license to sin, because God judges sin, and I don't care where you're at in life, you have an obligation to do the very best you can do and to love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, and keep your sin to a minimum. When you do sin, you confess it to God, you ask Him to forgive you, and then you go on with life, and you learn from your mistakes and you go on from there.

But there are two men in the Bible in an Old Testament scenario: one of them is David, and the other one is Saul. It represents for us that even though all sin is sin, God looks at sin from two different vantage points. This is very important to understand. That doesn't mean that God doesn't hate both of them; it simply means that God understands the one, and God really has a problem with the other.

Let me talk to you about David. David was a man, and the Bible says he was a king after God's own heart. He commits two sins: adultery and murder. In those two sins, under the Old Testament law, there is no sacrifice. The man is to die. All the other sins you could commit, you could bring an offering to the high priest and you could get your sins forgiven under that Old Testament situation. But not these two. David commits them both, and there is no sacrifice for that, yet God spares David's life. In fact, David gets something, and what a beautiful study it is,

and sometime we'll study it: God gives to David what is called in the book of Psalms the sure mercies of David. What that is is a picture of eternal security in the Old Testament, because David is a picture of your life and my life, and David and Saul and their lives represent two things that we need to understand. David should have been killed, but he wasn't.

Now you have Saul, and Saul is the king of Israel. Do you know what Saul's sin was? He usurped the authority of the priesthood. He wasn't a priest. He had no business to offer a sacrifice. But the story goes where, and Saul, you have to understand, Saul was always looking to get around the Word of God. Saul was always not doing what God said, using God and justifying what he wanted to do, but always stepping outside the boundaries of the Word of God. He didn't believe what God said, and he didn't care what God said. Saul has an agenda in a religious sense to do his own thing, and he represents a lot of God's people today. David represents a lot of God's people today, not because of sin that he does, just because God categorizes sin in two categories: you have the fleshly sins of the flesh, and you have spiritual sins of the flesh.

God judges both, and I'm not giving you a license in any way, shape, or form to sin, because God will judge your sin, and your sin needs to be confessed. But let me say this to you: God spared David, and He killed Saul. The Bible says that David had a heart after God. David, in fact, at the end of his life, God said he did what was right all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. That's where those two sins, adultery and murder, were committed. Yet when you go back and look at David's life, that's not really true. David had a lot of other problems, but do you know what David had going for him? David loved the Word of God. He loved the Bible more than any man probably in all of the Bible. Now that doesn't justify him not doing what's right, but I want to say this to you: we're all sinners, and you're all going to fail someplace along the line.

Your attitude toward the Word of God, your attitude—listen to me—your attitude toward this book is key to your success in whatever you do in life. Saul's attitude was terrible, and God killed him, and yet his sin by comparison was nowhere near like David's. But God says about religious men and religious sins, and men who trample the Word of God, and men who use the Word of God and literally hate the Word of God, He says in Matthew chapter 23, verse 14, talking about the scribes and the Pharisees who are religious, who play the game, who go to church, who wear the clothes, who have the talk, who have the walk, but the bottom line is they hate God and they hate God's Word.

Matthew 23:14

...therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

God looks at sin, and He sees it in two forms. He sees it as you and me, as just a good old sinner. Let me just say this: I deal with a lot of people. I would rather deal with just a good old plain sinner than I would a religious spiritual sinner. A good old sinner, you can just sit down, and he may not get saved, but he knows where you're coming from, and he knows deep down inside he's a sinner. You start talking to somebody about the Word, some of my vilest conversations, of

people being just absolutely unglued with me, has been around the Bible with supposedly saved people like Saul.

So I'm saying all that to say this: there's a process by which God eliminates the uncleanness of His church. One of the examples is Saul and David. When you talk about just fleshly sins, the Lord talks about it in the book of Psalms. I think it's Psalms 102 or someplace in there, it fails me right where it's at. But he goes on to this great dissertation, and he talks about the children of Israel. He talks about how that He does this for them, and then they reject Him. Then He does this for them, and they turn their back on Him. For 15 verses, it's just going back and forth of how God is taking care of the children of Israel and how they're just dumping God and running out and doing their own thing. I cannot read that without seeing myself in there. I cannot read that and put my life in that passage and say, "You know what, this is a picture of the mercy and the grace of God." At the end of that thing, He says this, and it is the greatest statement, I think, for me within the whole Bible. Do you know what God says? He says, "I should have whipped them. I should have," I'm paraphrasing, "I should have killed them. I should have clobbered them. Many times I was ready to just wipe them out. But then I remembered that they're just flesh, and like the grass that grows up." He understands that man, you and I, are going to struggle. He understands, and that's why, very frankly, we're all still alive today, because you know as well as I do, God's verdict probably killed us last week, but He didn't.

So God looks at people like that, and He doesn't justify it, but He understands that we as human beings have human passions and human feelings. He gave the church, He gave the Bible, and that is for the purpose of training you and giving you the Word of God that you can stand and be strong and in time overcome them. But you've got the other type, the Saul type, whose very existence is to get around the Word of God and destroy other people's faith in the Word of God. Saul was one of these guys, and he had no business being the priest, but he wanted to be the priest in his whole life, and he concocted the situation where he offered up the sacrifice, and he tried to justify it by saying, "What else could I do?" God said, "You know what you should have done," and for that act, God killed him. God took His mercy from him, the Bible says.

I want to say all that to bring us to this point: there is a process within the church called the Dung Gate that God uses water, the Word of God, to purge out the impurities of the church, just like you drink water to purge out the impurities of your body.

VI. The Importance of Doctrine

Did you ever stop and study for any moment of time when you look at the life of Christ, and here lies the answer? What was the real problem that the scribes and the Pharisees and the Jews and the Romans had with the Lord Jesus Christ? When you look at the whole scenario in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there's one thing that stands out, and it is the bedrock, the bottom line of why they wanted to get rid of Him and why they hated Him. Do you know what? It's the exact same thing today, and do you know what it was? It was His doctrine.

The word "doctrine" means to teach. The word "doctrine" really means the fundamental basis on which truth is founded. When it comes to 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 16, it says:

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:

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished—not finished, but furnished. You get the furnishing that you need for your temple that the Holy Spirit of God lives a comfortable life inside you, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. In other words, the four things that the Bible does for you builds your life and your relationship to the place that you're perfectly functioning the way God wants you to function. The first thing that he says is doctrine.

7. For doctrine
8. For reproof
9. For correction
10. For instruction in righteousness

Doctrine represents absolute truth. Let me just say this to you: there's not two ways to get to heaven; there's only one. I heard somebody say one time about all the other religions in the world, and I'm not picking on anybody, I'll make my point in a minute. I heard somebody say one time when somebody asked him, I watched on a television, he says, "What do you think about all the other religions?" He says, "Well, you know what, I believe that everybody is right, and everybody's trying to get their heaven their own way." He says, "Let me give you this analogy: I look at all the other religions like beautiful windows in a big wall, and each one of them allow the sunlight of God to come through from a different viewpoint." Now that sounds great. I wish I could talk like that. That's profound. But the only problem with it is, it's not true.

Jesus said, "Narrow is the way." He said, "I am the way, I, one, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and I ain't no window in no wall. I am the way, the truth, and life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Do you know what that is? That's doctrine. Do you know what the wall scenario is? It's waste material that needs to be carried out through the Dung Gate.

Everything in life, every issue in life, has a doctrine in the Bible. My job is to teach you that doctrine. Doctrine represents for us absolute truth. I have never understood why telling somebody the truth would make them mad. If you would lie to somebody and they would find out, they would get mad. I would get mad. If you lied to me and I found out later that you lied to me, I would be mad. Why would somebody be mad because you tell them the truth? You say, "No, that's just the way." No, that's not just the way it is today. Paul had the same problems in Galatians chapter 4, because he said in verse 16:

Galatians 4:16

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

You see, doctrine is truth, and I don't care what subject you want to talk about in the Bible, there are all the other ways out here, and then there's God's way in the Bible. Now what happens is this: people, for whatever reason, they have a tough time with doctrine. That was the problem

that they had with Christ. When you come back to the New Testament, look sometime, you don't have to turn to it now, look sometime.

Matthew 7:28-29

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes and the Pharisees.

Scribes and the Pharisees had no authority. They had no absolute truth. They gave you all kinds of this and that's and thou's and "we think this" and "we think that." It comes down and boils down today that the average Bible study that you go to in churches today, they sit around a little circle, they have coffee and tea, nothing wrong with that. They have all the little things, and then they all open up their Bibles, and everybody's got a different translation, and they go around and they'll take a verse, and then they'll sit around and they'll say, "What do you think this means? What do you think this means? What do you think this means?" After they go through 10 people, everybody gives you their private opinion what it means. Nobody goes to the Bible like we did, and I showed you how the Bible interprets itself. Nobody lays it out as doctrinal truth. Nobody goes to the book and says, "Thus saith the Lord." It's everybody's opinion, and at the end of the Bible study, it comes down to something like this: "This all gleans from what we've all learned from everybody today, and everybody look at everybody else like a little cookie on a tray, and everybody take the cookie of your choice and take it home with you and munch on it and get it through this week by the cookies that we had tonight."

The Bible is not likened to cookies. The Bible is likened to sirloin steak. It's likened to meat, and when you come to the Bible, the Bible is very clear, and this is what people don't like.

Matthew 22:33

And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

Mark 1:22

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

They said, "Whoa, I've never heard anything like that before." The scribes and the Pharisees just said, "Well, we didn't either, and we don't like it because they like him better than we like us. Well, he's getting bigger crowds than we are. Our church attendance is down. We've got these big old buildings up here with all these stained glass. He's meeting out in the field over here, and he's got 5,000 people." Do you know why? Truth.

I know the world isn't interested in truth. I know it's not, but I know the Bible is truth, and I know the truth makes people mad. I know that in time, there'll be people that come to this church that will get upset because of what is taught or the way it's taught, and they will leave and never come back. I understand, I'm sorry about that, but I do know this: I know that not everybody is going to enjoy this because not everybody enjoys truth, because some people come to God with preconceived ideas that "I want to believe this no matter what."

I don't know what your rules are for your relationship with God in the Bible, but here's my rule, and I live by this. I live by this all my life: I believe the Bible. I believe the Bible is the Word of God, and I'm saved, and I believe that Christ is who He says He is, and I believe all those things. But I want to tell you this: there is not one belief that I have that I wouldn't change in 10 seconds if God clearly showed me the truth and the way in the Word of God that was contrary to what I believe. I do not come to you this morning with my pet doctrine that I want to have. I don't come to you this morning with something that I believe that I want to hold on so desperately that I don't care what you say, I'm going to hang on to it.

I talked to a guy one time, and we were talking, and he was kind of a liberal, unchurched kind of guy, and we were talking about something in the Bible. I didn't remember what it was, but it was like in a forum with people, and he made one of the most incredible statements that anybody ever made. We were going back and forth, and I'd say, "What does the Bible say?" And he would give me all his stuff, and I just kept bringing him back, "What does the Bible say?" After about 20 minutes, he got so mad. The veins on his neck were sticking out. They looked like a four-lane highway. He was so upset with me, and finally he blurted out, "I don't care what the Bible says! I know what I believe!" I thought, "What a testimony." That's his problem. He was against absolute truth. When you say to yourself, "I don't care what the Bible says. I know what I want to believe," or "I want to believe what I want to believe," you're in trouble.

Mark 1:27

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

Luke 4:32

And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

The teaching of his doctrine was in the parables.

Mark 11:18

And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

Why? Because of His doctrine. They could not stand truth. Truth is the thing that the church needs to be built on, and it is the thing that when people come in, I believe that God will bring people into here not only to get them saved and to help them grow and to help them with their families and to help them get to the place we need to be. I believe also that God will bring people into here to prove them. I believe that there are people out there that say, "Oh God, I want the truth. I want the truth." God will maneuver their life to bring them, maybe not here, but someplace else where they will hear the truth, all because of the fact that God, like the old saying is, "Be careful what you wish for." You come to the place where God brings you and confronts you with truth just to see what you'll do with truth. Just to see if you'll say, "Well, I don't care what that preacher said. I don't even care if he showed me in the Bible, and I don't even care if

the Bible says that. I don't care if he can lay that thing out, and I don't even care if I can't prove my point or I don't even understand my point. I want to believe this. I'm going to keep on believing this. I don't care what anybody says, including the Word of God. I'm going to believe what I want to believe." You're in trouble.

Those kinds of people in time will destroy any church, because the farther you get from truth, the meaner you get. Do you know why you're all sweet this morning? And you are. My wife and I, as I said, we talk about everybody here, everybody, even the visitors we got, they are the most lovely people I have ever met in my life. Everybody just loves everybody. Everybody cares genuinely for everybody. Nobody's trying to get anything from anybody. Everybody just loves everybody. The reason why it is, is because the love that you have for the Word of God and truth. You started a long time ago by recognizing that the truth sets you free. You recognize now that that truth is what saved your families, and it made you the man or the woman you are today. You realize that that truth is absolute truth. It is doctrine. It is built on the Word of God. It is the absolute principles, and it gives you power in your life, and you see it for what it is. You're just the happiest person in the world.

Oh, sure, you have your problems. Sure, your kids still flunk algebra and math and all those other things. Sure, the car still breaks down. Sure, the lady swings out in front of you, and you honk your horn, and you get mad and lose your testimony at her. Those things are human things. We all have those things happen. At the end of the day, my wife and I were driving, and some idiot swung out in front of us. I said to my wife, "Boy, that's a woman driver for you." My wife nudged me and she says, "Honey, I hate to tell you this, but that's a man." I wound up my window to a police car in the next accident and said, "Arrest that person up there for impersonating a man. It's a woman driver." I'm just kidding. Men are worse than women. They are. Have you ever seen this road rage deal? When's the last time you heard the news that two women shot it out on I-70? You don't hear that. It's men. Everyone's get out and duke it out. They're the worst. I'm just telling you a little joke to kind of lighten things up a little bit, but men are the worst drivers in the world. I know, I used to be one. I mean, I used to be a driver and the worst driver in the world.

Anyway, doctrine is the key. It's always been the key. Truth. There's not two ways to look at the Bible. The Bible doesn't have two meanings to it. I can't read it, Scott can't read it, and Jimmy can't read it and come up with three different things. How ridiculous could that be? God had one thing that He wanted to convey to man. It was His plan, and He conveyed it in a book. That book is absolute truth. Your job and my job is to learn how to go within the book itself and find the truth, not to stand back and read it and say, "Well, I like that. I don't like this. I like that. I'll throw this out. I'll keep this, and I'll just fit this right into my philosophy of life." No, fit your life into the book. Let God be everything He wants to be to you. That was the problem.

VII. Why People Reject Doctrine

Let me show you the real issue. Now this one I want you to turn to. Turn to John chapter 7. This thing about power and authority, and this thing about the truth and this thing about doctrine and the scribes and the Pharisees, it all comes down to this. Here's why people really don't want to do

what they need to do with truth. This is the reason. John chapter 7. This is the bottom line. This is why people get angry. This is why people get mad. This is why people will come to this church for a while and they'll hear some things, and it may go contrary to what they want to believe. They couldn't sit down with a Bible and explain their position. But life depended on it. They heard somebody else say it. It's an experience that they feel. They have some feeling about it that makes it sound like it must be of God, and they have no concept, no idea of what the Bible says about it.

You've got people like the scribes and the Pharisees. They don't want truth. There's a reason why they don't want truth. They can't stand doctrine. They can't stand the Bible being the power and the Bible getting the absolute, because they want to have the power, and they want to be the absolute. Don't you know, when you go to somebody about the Bible and you've got to sit down and they've got to tell you, "Oh, look, what you just said isn't true. I've had much more education than you, and I know the Greek and I know the Hebrew. Now let me just forget this English language stuff. You clearly can't know the Bible until you know the Greek and Hebrew. Let me go down and give you the nuggets in this word." Don't that just grind you the wrong way? Let me tell you something, when God wrote a book, He wrote it so any idiot in this world could understand it. Do you think for a moment that God wrote the Bible just so the educated men in this world could figure it out? Those are the scribes and the Pharisees. They want to control you.

Now I may show you some things about the Bible that you don't know, and I may say, "No, that's not exactly right, but let me show you what the Bible says." But do you know what my agenda is? My agenda is to get you up and running with the Bible on your own so quickly that you don't need me. I don't want to be in your life the rest of your life calling you along with the Word of God. That's not my calling in life. That's not anybody's calling. My job is to reproduce myself into you, and then you reproduce yourself into somebody else. That's how the church goes. We do that by truth because the body, just like the physical body, has the ability to give life. It has the ability to heal. It has the ability to take care of itself in all those areas. When somebody doesn't, it gates in, one gate out.

I believe there are times when God brings people in just to give them a chance. I believe there are other people out there that are honest people that are just searching for the truth, and whatever you tell them, they'll say, "You know what, I believe that. I just want to be what God wants to be. I don't care what I've got to change about what I believe. I don't care this and that. I just want what God wants. You show it to me in the Bible, Bob, and you back it up with scripture." You'll never hear me giving you my personal opinion. You will never hear me say, "Well, this is my own personal opinion." Never. If it isn't in that book, if it isn't clear in that book, I'll never preach it. I'm not about to give you innuendos about what I think is going on. That book is truth. That book is absolute truth. That book is everything. The moment a man steps outside that doctrine and that authority, and he sets himself up as the doctrine authority, you've got a problem.

Here's why he does it.

John 7:14-18

Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught.

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

He's saying a man rejects doctrine because he wants the glory that God gets. Do you know why God wrote a book? This absolute, this unlike any other book the world has ever seen. I had a guy tell me one time, he was a Christian psychologist, and I was arguing with him over the fact in a kind of like a forum, and I was telling him that the Bible is the seat of all truth. The Bible is the final authority. There is no truth that exists outside this book. He countered by saying, "Well, I'm a Christian, and I understand what Brother Alexander was saying, but I think that here I believe the Bible is truth, but I just don't believe the Bible contains all truth." He says, "I believe the Bible is true." That's a nice Christian thing to say. That's like the windows in the wall. He says, "I believe the Bible is truth." He didn't come out and say, "I don't believe the Bible is true." He said, "I believe the Bible is truth." His deal was, "Mr. Saul, I just don't think the Bible contains all truth." What he was saying was, "I'm a psychiatrist. I've been trained by the best secular minds in this world. I believe the Bible is truth. I'll give you that. But I believe that secular psychology has things that the Bible doesn't have that only I can give you."

Let me just tell you something: I don't have anything to give you. If I didn't have this book, I don't have it. I don't have anything in my life that is going to be good for you, other than what God gave me in this book. I'll tell you right up front, if this book isn't everything, I'm finished. If this book isn't what God said, I put all my life and all my eggs and all my family's eggs in this basket. It didn't fail me yet. I failed it, but it's never failed me. There's no truth outside this book. But when a man wants to say, "Well, I don't want to believe that, and I want to believe what I believe," what he does, he wants the glory himself. Because when you take one book, one truth, and you stay in a doctrine and you say this thing is the way it is, and you let the Bible interpret itself, not Bob Alexander's interpretation, not yours, but comparing scripture with scripture, like I showed you in that dear lady's question Thursday night, you go to the Bible and let the Bible show you how it works itself out to get the answer. Then God gets the glory from it. God stands back, and that book glorifies God. When you throw the book away and you become the final authority, you get the glory that God wanted. That's what happens.

Jesus' doctrine in Mark chapter 12, verse 38, His doctrine was against the organized religion of the day.

Mark 12:38

And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,

They all wanted the final, they all wanted the power. They all wanted everything that went along with it. They wanted everything, and they didn't want to give anything to God. They were playing church. They had a form of godliness, but the Bible says they were denying the power thereof. That happens today, and the power thereof is that book. That book's the mind of Christ. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." It's an incredible book. It is the unsearchable riches, and yet I understand fully that I don't understand why people hate it. Like I said, I don't understand why people get upset about the truth. I can understand you getting upset about somebody trying to steal something from you or lying to you or doing this or doing that. I can understand that, but why somebody would get mad just because you're telling the truth? The only answer is right here: it comes to the point where you're not willing to give up whatever you believe, whatever the book says.

VIII. The Church's Mission: Teach and Prove

That's the key to this church. This church must always stay pure in its doctrine. It's the first thing that this Bible's profitable for. He said, "All scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable." Number one, for doctrine. This church has to rest on the absolute final authority of the Word of God. No question about it. This church has to have a ministry that teaches those doctrines. Just to have them doesn't do any good. I need to teach you those doctrines so you can teach somebody else. If I wanted to just play the God aspect myself, I wouldn't teach them to you. I'd just diddle them out there and talk about how great they are and show you how smart I am and do this thing, but never show you the keys. I'd keep all those things back. No, I want you to have everything that you have at your fingertips. In time, you ought to know the Bible better than anybody else in the whole face of this planet. It ought to be your book, and you ought to know everything about it, because teaching the doctrines of the Bible is the job of this church, and God will bring people in that want to learn. God will bring people in who don't want to learn to prove them. There'll be people that come in time that say, "I'm not coming back. That's not what I believe," or "That's not really what I want." When you just stick with the doctrine, God gets the glory. When you make up your own doctrine, you get the glory.

I'll give you proof. I'm not picking on anybody, but let's talk about the Mormons. Let's talk about Jehovah's Witnesses. Just take those two groups. When you talk about them and you ask them who's their founder, who do they say? If you ask the Jehovah's Witness, "Who's your founder?" he'll say Russell or Rutherford. You ask the Mormon, "Who's your founder?" Do you know what he'll say? He'll say, "It's Joseph Smith." You ask me who my founder is? Jesus Christ. See the difference? There's no man in the world can say his founder is Jesus Christ, because from 1860 on back, there wasn't anybody to believe what the Mormons believed. I have a standing offer. I told this to a Mormon guy one time. I said, "I'll pay you a million dollars on demand if you show me any place in history where there's anybody who believed what you believe before Joseph Smith showed up in 1850, 1840, someplace in there and came up with that. I'll give you \$1 million." He kind of smugly laughed and says, "Brother, you know, you don't have a million dollars." I said, "I can get it before you can find the place in history, because there ain't any place in history." That's why you say, "Who's your founder?" Joseph Smith. "Who's my founder?" Jesus Christ. There's no human man involved with mine. There's nobody you say, "Well, the

Apostle Paul." No, he got it from the apostles who got it from Christ. That's my point. When a man sets himself up and says, "I've started this religion," it's because he wants to get away from the doctrines of the Bible, and he wants to take the glory himself. There's no glory for you or me here. The glory needs to go to God. That's the only way this church is going to function. He said, "If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men unto me." I don't have anything to offer. I don't have anything to give you. I don't have anything I can say, anything I can tantalize you with other than the Word of God. I don't have anything. Anything I got, I got from Him. I can't take any credit for it.

But God will bring people in just like that, and I love them. I pray for them. Anytime I've sat down and talked to them, anytime, any place, anywhere, it was one purpose in mind: that is to help them see the truth. I'm not talking about just being a Baptist. I'm talking about believing the Bible. But God will bring people in, and we'll have to prove them. The Word of God will prove them. Some will change what they believe. There'll be people that come in, and I've had people in my ministry over the years, they said, "Bob, you know what? I don't care what I have to change or what I believe. I just want God in my life. Everything else is second place. I just want that. If I believe something that isn't right, I'll throw it out. I just want what God wants." When somebody takes that, look out, because God's going to do something in their life. That's the right, that's David's attitude. That's why he did what he did in the fleshly sense of his sins, and God didn't kill him, even though God should have killed him by the accordance of law. His attitude at heart was, "God, I know I'm a sinner, and I know I make mistakes, and I know I've screwed up, but the bottom line is, I love You and I love Your Word. You look a long time to find anybody to believe that book more than me, and Lord, I'll change whatever I've got to change to line up with what You want me to do."

God says, "Saul, on the other hand, no, no, he's like the scribes and the Pharisees. He wants the glory. He's always manipulating to be in the limelight and get everything and take the glory from God." Finally, he walks down there and he offers that sacrifice. When the prophet confronts him with it, he says, "You know what?" He says, "It was late in the day. I didn't know what else to do. The real priest didn't show up." It wasn't true. The real priest showed up about two minutes before the deadline. Do you know what he said piously? He says, "Well, God didn't come through when He said He would, so I just forced myself to do it." God said, "I would have come through because I wanted to prove you, Saul. And you think two minutes is not enough time for God to get the job done?" God will get the job done in the last millisecond of the last second, the last clock for the rapture takes place. And he says, "So I'm going to force myself. I'm going to kill you." God killed him.

Those two types of people. This church has eight gates to bring people in. In those gates, we love people. We're there for people. I'll do anything I can do. In those gates, we're talking about them. We're seeing how they lay it out. But there's one gate that nobody goes in. They only come out. That's only based on people who don't want to do what's right with the Word of God, because this church, as long as I'm pastor, as long as I'm here, this church will do what's right with the Word of God. This church will stand on the book. It'll teach the book. It'll love the book. It'll preach the book. And there won't be any variance from it. I don't know any other way to do it. I don't know any other way that God honored it. I'm only doing it for one reason: because I want

God to get the honor and glory out of this church. He only gets honor and glory as His Son's exalted. His Son can be exalted as you only preach the Word, and that's where it lies.

So that's where we're at, the Dung Gate. There'll be people that come in, want to do what's right, they'll go. There will be people that come in and maybe they'll struggle for a while, and we'll have to work with them and help them. I had one guy, now pastoring a church right now, that I spent almost two years with him going through things in the Bible so he'd get a handle on believing the Bible was the Word of God so he could preach. But I'm telling you, there'll be people like that, but there'll be people that come in that the longer they stay, the more problems they're going to cause. Eight gates in, one gate out. I don't want to see it. I'm not looking for it, but I'm smart enough to know that in the world that we live in, it's going to happen. That's why the marvelous things about the Word of God, the Word of God is such a marvelous book that it shows you the way things are going to go before they ever happen.

I just thank God for every man and woman, every visitor this morning, everybody that's been coming. I'm telling you what, if you want to learn the Bible, this is the place. I'll give you whatever time it takes, I'll do whatever I've got to do, I'll put as many people with you as need to be with you to help you. I will do whatever it takes to get you to the place where you can stand on your own two feet with this book. That's my goal. Your dependency on my preaching and my teaching needs to be very limited. We come here on Sunday morning, but not because you have a dependence on me, because God set it up in the structure of the church as a place that you get edified. Together, I've got a number of men that could do it just as well as I'm doing it. In time they will. They'll all take turns preaching, and they'll all give you the Word of God because they believe it just like I do. The bottom line is this: that's our job. That's our job. We will take whatever time we have to take to help you get to the place where you need to be in the Bible. That's all we do. That's why we exist. No other reason, no other purpose. Let's pray. Father, we do...