

I. The Danger Of Misinformation

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want you to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 29. We are going to be there in just a little bit. We will bounce around a few minutes before we get there, but that is where we are going to finally land.

We have been talking about building your life into the Word of God and God into your life. We have tried to take a number of approaches that really help you understand some things as they need to be defined in the Word of God. We live in a day and age where there is so much misdefinition, so much misinformation.

I think a lot of times, I look at this so-called war on terrorism we are having and I see that since 9/11, our world has certainly changed. I look at the terror alert level system that we have, and I appreciate all that our country does to try to keep us safe. But I also know that in guerrilla warfare or guerrilla tactics, the greatest weapon you can have is the weapon of misinformation. Running people all over the place 24/7, coming up with all kinds of plans where you are canceling flights, doing this and doing that, will in time destroy this nation. This nation will not be able to keep that up forever. Misinformation will destroy this nation where the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers could not. For the rest of their lives, they do not have to do a thing. All they have to do is say they are going to do it because they know that we love our country and our people so much that we will respond to do whatever it takes, to the tune of millions and millions of dollars a day when we are on a certain alert. This country cannot keep that up, and I think probably in time, if something does not happen, we are in for some serious situations.

As I look at that, I think to myself, that is exactly how the devil has destroyed Bible Christianity: through misinformation, through misdefining things, and having God's people lose their definitions of things. That is part of the latency in the church. Latency in the church is a church system that has no God, no Bible, but they have religion. They have things that are Christian, they have things that are spiritual, but they do not have anything that is Scripture or anything that is biblical. It is much like the nation of Israel was in the Old Testament when they went into apostasy, that they have a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. Because of that, God's people today are living their lives for God one way, when in actuality, God has nothing to do with that, and it is all based on misinformation and misdefining things in the Bible. That is what the devil does best. When he showed up with Adam and Eve in the garden, it was not to get Eve to do some terribly dastardly sin. It was simply an aspect of misinformation. He pulled the same trick that has been pulled down through history: if a lie is taught long enough, people will believe it. That is what we are faced with today, and that is where our battle is as Christians and as a church.

II. Defining A Personal Relationship With Christ

Now, you know my heart, and you know I am committed to changing that within our own sphere. I have no illusions that we are going to change the world. I am not interested in changing the world. I am interested in just taking what God gives me and preaching the truth. I have never been interested in results all of my life. God takes care of the results, but I am interested in the truth.

I have tried to focus a lot of things on showing you how to get a balance in your life between your family, your work, your relationship with God, and all of those things. I have showed you how the Bible lays itself out doctrinally, historically, and inspirationally. Last week, I showed you how to put those things into your life in Isaiah 28, where I talked about the day you got saved, you laid the foundation and the building blocks, or the precepts and the principles of God. The line upon line is the doctrine that you build that keeps your wall straight as you are building your temple for the Lord. We went through all of that.

I am trying, before we get to the point where we really get into the Bible and I start teaching you book by book, how the book goes. That is what we are going to do. God has showed me that when we get to a point where we get these things defined, we are going to start in Genesis and come through every book of the Bible, one hour on Sunday morning. I am going to lay out the book so that when you sit down to study the Bible, you will have everything that you need to know what that book is all about. You may have to put some of the other details to it, but we are going to build a base, a library, that anybody coming into our church down the line can get the same material. We are going to put it in binders, and it will look like the Bible. We will have an Old Testament, a New Testament, and we will put all of those things together in time. My only goal is to help you to get the Bible into your life.

In the process of doing that, there are things that we have to define, and there are things that we have to look at, and there are things that I want you to understand. Today, I want to talk about the personal application or the inspirational application. I want to define it for you. I want to talk about today what it means, and I want you to think about this. I want to talk to you this morning about what it means to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I want you to think about what it means to have Him as your own personal Savior.

Those are standard terms. Those are like the terms "born again" and "saved." You hear it a thousand times. There is not a preacher in this world who does not get up and talk about the fact that you need to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. We have worked that term so much, and we have gotten all that material we talk about, and all of those things. We put all the emphasis on having a personal relationship with Christ, and what does it mean for Christ to be your personal Savior? In the process of that, we have lost the definition of that.

Bible Christianity is the only, and I use the word "religion" even though it is not, you know what I am talking about. It is the only aspect in this world that truly teaches you to have a one-on-one relationship with God. I want to define that for you, and you are going to have to bear with me today because this is going to be a hard message to preach. It is going to be hard from the standpoint that I am going to try to get an idea across to you, and a biblical definition of a personal relationship with God across to you. That is really hard because there are so many

things I want to say, and there are so many things that I need to say. I guess in a message like this, the order that you say them is just as important as what you have to say. So I want to build this thing to a point where you walk out of here today, and everybody says, "I understand it, I see it now, and I can work toward that end." That is what I want to do.

So, let us ask God to bless us this morning and ask the Holy Spirit of God to open up our understanding, open up my mind, allow these things to flow the way they need to, and then we will come back to the Word of God.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You, and I thank You for these men and women that are here today, for their love for You, for the Word of God. Lord, I do not doubt anyone's love that is here today. I do not doubt anyone's love that is here today for You. I really do not. I am not preaching this message as a cascading message and jumping all over people. I am trying to convey in my heart what I know to them so they will have a better understanding, so we can do a better job for You. That is all. I love these people. I would never chew these people out. I would never get on these people's case about anything. That is not my job. The hands of chastisement belong to God. My job is to preach truth in a loving way and love these people no matter what happens, no matter what they do. So Lord, we need You to help us today to see and understand, and we will thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

III. The Exclusivity Of Your Personal Relationship With God

Now, I want to start by asking you this question. I want you to think about this thing. This is going to be more of a philosophical thing today, but we need to deal with this. How do you view God, the Word of God, the things of God, and your own personal relationship with God? When I am trying to get this idea and this biblical definition of a personal relationship across to you, that is the thing I have to ask you first.

In laying this out, I am going to use myself as an example. But even though I am using myself as an example, I want to apply it to all of you because what is good for me is good for you. I am no better than you are when it comes to the Lord. Everything that God has given me, God will give you or has given you. I do not have any greater spiritual insight. I do not have any more of the Holy Spirit of God. I am not any smarter. I do not have any better abilities. I cannot even play the harmonica. I do not have anything better than you have. So, going into this, the first thing we need to understand is that we are all even on this. What I am going to talk about myself, I want to apply it to you. I want you to understand that I am not standing up here saying I have arrived and preaching to you down here that you need to get up with me. I am telling you, we are all in the same mess together, and I am not any better or any worse than you are. Our survival every day is the same. You struggle with the same things that I struggle with. I struggle with the same thing that you struggle with. We all have downtime in our lives. We all do stupid things. There is nobody in this room that is above sin. We have to understand that that is where we are at.

I am going to use myself as an example. I want to apply it to you because in understanding this, I want you to grasp this concept: in your personal relationship with God, there has to be a part of

my life as a Christian that excludes all of you. There has to be a part of my life as a Christian that excludes my family. I love my family. No man in the world loves his wife and his kids more than I do. I understand all that about my grandbaby, and the one that is coming, and the boys that God has given my daughters for husbands. I love them like they are my own sons. In fact, I do not look at them any other way; they are my own flesh and blood. But in all of that, when I talk about my personal relationship with God and the Word of God, there has to be a point where you, as my friends, cannot go, where you, as my family, cannot go. There has to be a place in your life where you realize nobody can go except you and God.

I came to that conclusion a number of years ago when I looked at all that God had given me: all of my friends, all my family, and all of the things that God has done—the good things and the bad things—all of those things that meet together. When I say "the bad things," you know what I am talking about; just the scope of life, how God always takes care of you. I look at all of that. When I thought about it, and in light of the Bible and the Word of God, I realized that all those things are important. All those things are absolutely essential for life and the plan of God in life on planet Earth for us to fulfill the plan. But the real bottom line is that the real plan of God was nothing more than for me and God to have fellowship together. That is the bottom line.

I love my family. I love my church. I love my people. But the bottom line of my life and the bottom line of your life, the reason why God saved you and the reason why God saved me, in spite of the fact that God wants me to build a church, He wants me to win people to Christ, He wants me to let my body be the temple of the Holy Ghost and bring people and men to Christ through all that and all of that—the real bottom line is that God loved me and saved me above all else. God wanted to have fellowship personally with me.

When I understand that, I put my family, my friends, my church, and every relationship in my life in the proper balance, in the proper order. I come to the conclusion that if I do not have that first, I will never be the husband or the father I need to be to my kids. If I do not have that first, I will never be the true friend to you that I need to be. If I do not have that first, I will never be the pastor that God wants me to be, because it is not based on Bob to really get up there and lay out the Bible. It is not based on Dad always being there when he needs me. It is not based on, "Well, he never forgets my birthday, and he will buy me anything I want and give me all this within reason." Do not take this out any farther than what I am saying, darling. But the bottom line is, none of that would make a difference. None of that would ever even be here if it was not for the fact that God wants to have a one-on-one, personal, intimate relationship with me. When I understand that, I realize that my friends and my family are wonderful, and all that I have is in place. But you realize that none of it would even be here or even be possible if it was not for what God did for me personally, and that personal relationship with God above all else.

A place where nobody else can go. A place where it is just Him and I. A place where it is just right there, which forms an attitude in my heart toward God that drives me on and drives you on. It is so personal. It is so intimate. It is an attitude of heart that only Him and you share, because I want to tell you something: God forbid, but in this life, things happen. In this life, you had better build a relationship and understand that the bottom line has to be you and Him, because in this life, that is simply what it may come down to sometimes. That is exactly what will be all you

have. God forbid that you would ever lose your wife, you would ever lose your husband, you would ever lose your kids, but things happen. I am telling you, whether it does or it does not, the bottom line is your personal relationship with Christ, and that intimate, personal place where nobody else goes is the only thing that will get you through this life when everything and everybody else fails you and leaves you.

We, as God's people—me included—are famous in our lives for just giving God what is left over. I know it is true of me. I know it is something I have to work on every day. I know that I look at all that I have and all that is out there, and God is good to you. Do you know what you do? We all do this. It is not anyone; everybody, every child of God has this problem of success: when you begin to take God for granted. We are happy with our church, and we love our church, and we would never be anywhere else. We have seen the phenomena of things. We know what God has done, and we love it. I sit around and listen to you talk about how much you love being here and the Word of God and all those things. I believe every one of you, but the bottom line is, do not ever think that you will not come to the place at some point where you do not catch yourself taking things in this church for granted. We talk about the Bible and loving the Bible and all the things that are in the Bible, but I am telling you, be careful because you will come to the place where the Bible will not be as special as it once was. It is an automatic thing of human nature to start taking things for granted when things start going really good. You have to have a place that is so personal and so intimate that your wife cannot go there, your husband cannot go there, your daughters cannot go there, your sons cannot go there, and the people in your church cannot go there. It is a place where it is just you and God, and that is where you go down to the things in life where it is just you and Him.

I know that is true in life because it is true in death. If there is ever a place where your personal, intimate relationship with God shows up, and it had better be there, it is when you die. The scenario is simple. Barring you are not killed in a car wreck someplace, you die of some terminal disease or old age or whatever. You love your family, and your family is grieved, and you are grieved. You are lying there in a hospital bed, or you die, or in the last moments of your death, all your family is around you. You love them, and you are going to miss them. You can see their pain, and you have pain and agony. But let me tell you something: when the point of death comes, you have to be ready to step out of this body, take His hand, and walk with Him and understand that everything is going to be okay. Because now you are just opening up that relationship that you had all along, the personal thing. Now you understand that this life was great, your family was great, your friends were great, your church was great, but that really was not the whole bottom line. The bottom line always was and always has been your personal, one-on-one relationship with Him. So when you have to leave this life, and your family, and your friends, and your church, and your loved ones, it is okay. It is okay. It is okay. That is why the Bible says it is okay to mourn. It is okay to have grief, but you also have joy. Because you understand that God loves you so much and wants to be with you so much and will take you and carry you to Heaven with Him in a beautiful way. I do not believe for a moment that the Rapture is such an exciting thing and death is such a bummer. I believe dying and missing the Rapture is just as exciting and just as intimate as Christ coming for you with the Rapture of the church. I believe that because we do not understand the personal relationship side, we do not understand

the personal Savior concept and the personal relationship—my personal friend—that we think it is only true for here and it exists so I can have all this with my family. No, no. It exists because the bottom bedrock of every child of God is your secret place and your secret time where it is just you and Him. The reality of that is when you die. You have to leave your friends. You have to leave your dogs. You have to leave your car. You have to leave your possessions. You have to leave your house. You have to leave your family. You have to leave your friends, and it is just you and Him.

IV. The Personal Nature Of Christ's Sacrifice

I think to myself, I talk about the crucifixion of Christ. Now I am going to talk to you about this personal thing. I know that Christ died on the cross. If you would ask the average Christian, "What does the crucifixion mean to you?" he would say all the right things. He or she would give you the definitions that they have been taught and told. They could run you to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and they would show you Christ dying on the cross there, and you would see that, and you would see the story there. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they all give different perspectives of it, and you would see all of that, and you would say, "That is the crucifixion." Let me tell you something: that is not the crucifixion. That may be the crucifixion when you do not have a real personal time with Him. But I want to tell you something: I am not concerned with the... I mean, I love the fact that He died for me, and I love all of that, but I am not overly impressed with the fact that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John just show me the event. I want to go beyond that because I know that to have a personal Savior—for me to make the decision to trust Christ, or after I am saved, for me to make the decision to give my life and everything to build that relationship and do whatever God wants me to do—I am going to need more than that. God gave me more than that.

Job 30

Psalms 22

Job 16

Isaiah 50

Isaiah 52

Isaiah 53

Psalms 89

I want to tell you something: God gave me more than Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. God, in those passages, will account for every hour of the crucifixion. He will allow me to look into the mind of God and see everything that He thought, not just the grand scheme of things that God is allowing His Son to die on the cross in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but a place where I can really understand what He felt and what He thought, and the fear just like I have, and all the things that must have been flooding through His mind. The crucifixion just does not become a stereotype that we talk about. It becomes personal to me.

Then I come to a great conclusion. I believe intellectually that Christ died for the world. I believe intellectually that He died for everybody in this room. Personally, I think He had my name on His lips on that cross. You see, I cannot claim that for you. If you can claim that, praise the Lord, but you cannot claim it for me. To me, the crucifixion is something personal. I will tell you something. He says over there in Isaiah 45:3:

Isaiah 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

It was my name He was calling there. You say, "No, it was mine." You say, "No, it was yours." You say, "No, it was mine." It was mine. It was mine. Okay, I do not care. You can claim it; claim it. I am telling you, I am not claiming that for you. I have a personal Savior who paid a personal debt, and while He was hanging there in the agony on the cross, He was saying my name. I know intellectually. I am not talking intellectually; I am talking personal. I am talking about when He died on the cross, and He was feeling the agony and the bearing and the hell of all the devils bringing from their sixth to the ninth hour, when God turned His back on His own Son. Then it was not just Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It was not just, "I thirst," or "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," or "Father, it is finished." It was much deeper than that. God's people take the easy route. They get the non-personal position of the crucifixion. You get into that Book and let God show you what He was thinking. You understand what it means for God to be your personal Savior.

V. The Bible As A Personal Love Letter

I believe the Bible is the greatest Book ever written. I believe it is the greatest Book the world has ever seen. Yes, I do believe it will do for you all that I have told you it will do. Yes, I believe that it will change your life. It will give you understanding in all things. It will help you. It will teach you. It will encourage you. It will grow you. I know all those things intellectually, but personally, He wrote it for me. He wrote it for me. He wrote it for me, I am telling you. Until you come to that conclusion, that you realize that you had a personal Savior who thought about you on the cross, and then you have a personal relationship where He wrote you a Book, you will never have the passion for God that you need to have. There will always be something else that will take your attention away. There will always be something else that will be the flood of your soul. You will never have that passion without understanding what I am saying to you.

Most of God's people live their lives today simply like this: nothing personal. Nothing personal. "Oh, I am a Christian. I am saved. I go to church. I tithe. I do all those things." But when it comes to me and God, nothing personal. Nothing personal. Nothing personal, I am telling you. God's people look at it as a Bible. I look at it as God's love letter to me. I do not look at it as a Bible. I do not look at it as some book of great theological principles and doctrine. I believe that intellectually. Oh, you want to talk about my personal Savior, and you want to talk about my personal relationship? This is my love letter from God to me. It allows me to see Him on the cross in all of His pain and all of His agony. It allows me to see how much He loved me, and all that kind of personal relationship that will get you through when everything else forsakes you, because you built a place in your life where nobody else can go.

VI. The Personal Relationship In Action: Job And Enoch

I do not understand a lot of things about what Job went through. I know a lot about the book of Job to teach you, to give you a lot of good things. But I know this: Job went through in seven days what you and I will never go through in our lifetime. He loses everything that you and I will never lose in our lifetime, in seven days. Yet, Job has no Bible. He has no church. He has no pastor. He has no friend. The three that show up, they are not friends. Even his wife turned against him. Then the doctor comes in and says, "You lost your kids, you lost your house, you lost your riches, you lost everything." Now you have a terminal disease that got so bad that you are sitting on an ash heap, scraping your boils with a piece of broken pottery. Do you know what Job did have? I do not fully understand it, but I do know this: he had a relationship with God because in the midst of all of that, he said, "I do not care if He kills me, yet will I trust Him." He understood something that we need to understand. He did not get that from just going to church; he did not have a church. He did not get that from just reading the Bible; he did not have a Bible. He did not get that from his Christian friend or his Christian TV, or The 700 Club, or some other book that he read by Watchman Nee or Peter Ruckman or anybody else in the whole wide world. He got that because he had a personal relationship with the God of this universe that felt so confident in him that when the devil came to God and said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" The devil did not bring Job's name up; God did. Do you know what God said? "He is My friend. I have a relationship with him."

I often think of Enoch. The Bible says Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. I have often thought about that. No Bible, no church. But he felt enough comfort with God. Here is how it went. I believe that God and Enoch spent time together every day. I believe the Bible says Enoch was not, for God took him. I believe that they were walking down the road one day, and God just said, "Enoch, this is a pretty nice place." Enoch said, "Boy, God, You sure did a whopper when You created this. It is beautiful. I know it has its problems, but this is a great place." God said, "Yes, it really is." They were walking, that personal, personal... It was not that stereotype of "nothing personal" that God's people have. It was personal. There was a day when they walked down that road, or they walked through that wheat field, or they walked outside of the backyard, and they were looking around, and it was so beautiful. Enoch said, "Lord, for 300 years I have walked with You, and it has been absolutely great. Thanks for coming down here and spending time with me." God said, "Next week, why do you not come up and spend a day with Me?" Enoch said, "You mean it?" God said, "I mean it." Enoch went to Heaven to spend a day with God, found out that there is no night there, and has been there ever since. It is personal. It is personal. But he had to leave it all. He had everything. He had to leave it all. Every man in that Bible was willing to leave everything they had: Abraham, Paul, every one of them. Why? Because they saw something in God, and they had something in God where nobody else in the world could go. It was enough to get them through anything. When push came to shove, they said, "Goodbye, world. Goodbye. It is me and Him. It has always been me and Him." Oh, it may look like it is different, but it is always you and Him. It is always you and Him. That is the kind of personal relationship that will get you through when everything else forsakes you.

VII. The Key: Personal Promises And The "Jewel Box" Of The Heart

All right, here it comes. Enter the key promises of God.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Let me give you a definition of a promise. Oh, and I could give you 30, 40, 50 verses that these are great promises. I do not want to stereotype the concept of a promise. Do you know what a promise is?

Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Whatever God puts in your heart to keep you from walking with the world, that is a promise. That is a promise. That is a promise.

It is like this. Let me give you an example. You are driving home today, and your transmission goes out or your engine blows up. You get Tom's Tow Service to take it over to a garage someplace. The guy checks it out. He says, "Well, that is going to cost you. That is going to cost you about \$1,100." You say, "No problem." You go to the bank. You say, "Hey, how are you doing today?" She says, "I am doing fine. How are you?" "Oh, I am fine. Lovely day." "Yes, can I have one of those little suckers there?" "Yes, go ahead and have one." "Let me ask you a question. I need \$1,100. My car is on the fritz. The engine blew up. It did not go, and I need \$1,100." She says, "No problem. What is your account number?" "Well, I do not have an account number. This is the bank. You have money. I need some money. I am in a tough time right now. Things are bad. I need some money." "Well, you have to have an account. We need to have an account." "Can I talk to your boss?" "Sure. Come over here, sit down in that nice little office over there." The guy says, "Can I help you?" And you say, "Yes, thanks for the sucker. But let me ask you a question. My car... I was going down the road coming home from church. I go to Oak Park after church. I come there sometimes, and I was driving home the other day, and my engine blew up. And it is always a garage. It is going to be \$1,100. So, I mean, it is the bank out there, First National Bank, and I need \$1,100. Now I see a woman over there, so I could not have it because I do not have any other account. I do not have an account here, but this is the bank I need. Please give me the money." He says, "Sir, you do not understand. Here is how this thing works: you get a job and you work. You take so much of your money and you live on it. Then, so much of that money you give to the Lord—I had to get that in—and then some of that money you put in the bank. Then every month—12 months in a year, sir—every month you put \$100 in. At the end of the year, you have \$1,200. You need \$1,100, and you have \$100 left." Now, you get paid, you work, or you do not work, whatever. In both cases today, you have no money. Or you get money, and you blow it on everything you want: wild women and song. You do all this. You go here, buy this, get all this stuff. You go to Rent-A-Center because you can get it there, and you get it cheap, paying for it by the month. You go over there, and somebody says, "Buy it today, pay for it four years from now." I have never figured that thing out. If I knew when the Rapture was going to take place for sure, I would make a killing. If I could find one of those "buy it now,

pay four years later" deals, and I knew the Rapture was going to fall in between, oh boy, we would be living like kings, I am telling you that. But you never get that thing out. It shows you where my heart is, does it not? Okay. Can you blip that off the tape back there?

Anyway, he says, "All right, you come to the point where you do not save any money. You do not have anything." So when something comes, when your car breaks down, you would have nothing on the account. Spiritual application: God gave you a Book called the true riches. Your heart is the bank account. Put it in, put it in, put it in, put it in, put it in, put it in. Your life breaks down. Something happens. Something at work, something in the home, somebody dies. Your friend turns on you, your dog bites you. Something happens. You need something. Do you ever wonder why some of God's people go around screaming when everything happens and do not know what to do? I will tell you why: because they do not have anything on the account.

Psalms 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

The true riches are the true riches. When you put them into your heart and you put them in your life, and you build it on the account, and it builds and it builds and it builds and it builds, in time, anything that comes up, you have enough money in the bank to take care of it. Anything that happens, anything that happens, you do not have to run to your preacher. You do not have... and there is nothing wrong with that. I am not saying that, but I am saying there needs to come a time in your life when you handle your own problems. There is always going to be something you need somebody else to help you with or lay the thing out. That is fine. But everybody in your life needs to come to a point where you understand, "Hey, look, I can deal with this because I have it on the account."

He says in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10:1 Corinthians 2:9-10 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

There is your heart. I am telling you, it is the promises. It is the promises. It is the promises that God gives you that are the deep things. When you get into the Bible and you get the right attitude of heart with God, and you understand having a personal relationship, and you understand having a personal Savior, how it is personal to you—that it may be for everybody, and they have to claim their own, and you can claim it for you—then God gives you the personal promises.

Do you know how I got saved? God promised me before the foundation of the world that I could be saved. God promised for the hope of eternal life, which God promised before the foundation of the world. He promised me, and when I believed that promise, God saved me. Now I get through my life today because God gave me promises to save me and to show me that He is my personal Savior. God gives me promises to get me through every day that shows me I have a personal relationship with Him, and it is all based on the personal promises. The great lost definition in the hearts of God's people today, it is the place in your heart, the place in my heart, where nobody goes. Just you and God. Just you and God.

When I was a kid growing up, one of the things I remember about my mom and my home—we had a small house, did not have a lot—but I remember my mom. It was one of those boxes that she cranked up, and it had a ballerina on the top that played a little music and danced around. This ballerina was in an old box. I think it belonged to her mother or somebody. She only had one leg; one leg had fallen off. I always thought to myself, "What in the world does a one-legged ballerina have to do with anything?" I would go in there and crank that thing up, and I would watch her dance around. I was thinking, "Well, she does pretty good for a one-legged ballerina." The music would play, and it would go around, and all those things. One day my mother came in there, and she says, "Do not, do not, do not." She said, "Bob, Bobby," she said, "You can do whatever you want to do, but do not ever touch that box again. Do not ever touch it again." "Well, okay, Mom, but I did not mean to. I did not break the leg off the ballerina; it was already off." She said, "I know that box is very special, and what is inside is even more special." I said, "Well, Mom, what is inside it?" She opened that up. She showed me all the things that her mother had given her, all the things that my dad had given her, and my little bracelets from when I was born. You know how they used to put those little... now they put one of those plastic tape things on it. Back then, they used to have little beads with your name on it. It used to go around there, and it would be a different color for boys, a different color for girls, that had your name on it. They were in there for my sister and myself. She began to explain to me, "This is my jewelry box. Bob, nobody goes here." She says, "In here are all the special things that are keepsakes. In here are all the things that you love and cherish." I began to grasp the concept many years ago because I want to tell you something: the jewelry box is your heart. Just like every woman in this room probably has some place—maybe not a little box, maybe it is a drawer, maybe it is a box. It is something where you keep the special things that somebody who loved you and cared for you gave you, because they loved you more than anything else in this world. It may be the most insignificant thing, but you would not trade it for the world. I have seen women who kept ticket stubs from a ball game where they had their first date. I have seen my wife keep a ring that I bought at Woolworth when I asked her to go steady many, many years ago. The truth comes out: I paid 69 cents for it. You are laughing. Do you want to hear something that is even funnier? You could not buy it today for \$10,000. From her, see me afterwards, and we will make a deal. But do you know why? It is in her box. It is not mine. And do you know what? Every woman in this place, you have the same thing someplace. You see, I have a personal Savior and I have a personal relationship that you cannot go to, and you need to have one where I cannot go. It is based on the personal promises that are in my jewel box, my heart—a special place that is separate from everything else in your life, a fixed spot that never changes, not losing its value, not losing its love, based on what the love of your life has given you in that secret moment. When looking at those precious things, it brings back the flood of those precious memories that will endure for a thousand generations.

VIII. The Secret Things Revealed

I often thought of Song of Solomon. I think my favorite passage is in chapter five. You do not have to turn to it, but he starts out in verse eight, and she says this:

Song of Solomon 5:8 I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

Love-sick. I got looking at that, and what follows is an incredible thing. When I saw that verse, I realized that she was... this is the picture of you and me. This is what my attitude should be toward Christ. It is pictured as a woman whose love of her life is not there. She is telling somebody, "If you see him, if you see him, I charge you. If you find him, you tell him that I love him." As I read down through this, I always got the impression of her sitting by the window, looking down that road that she knows he left on, knowing he is going to come back. She says:

Song of Solomon 5:9-16 What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Now, I do not know if you know or not, but I always saw her looking down that road, thinking about the last time she saw him and remembering what she knew about him. Every one of these things in here—white, ruddy, head like gold, bushy locks, eyes by the doves, rivers of waters, washed with milk, fitly set, cheeks, hands—all of these things are defined in the Word of God to give you a complete, intimate, unbelievable picture of the One you are supposed to have a personal relationship with. I see her putting down the book, putting down the pen, and looking off down that road and saying to herself—and I say it to you—"This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

Deuteronomy 29:29. Here it comes. Oh, this is the introduction, but we are almost done.

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

You see, the deep, secret things that are in that Book, they belong to God, and God knows your name, and God wants to give you some promises in your jewel box. When God reveals those things to you because of your intimate, personal... you always say things to people you are more intimate and more secure with than somebody you really do not know. It is the same way with God. Do you think just because you are saved and going to spend eternity with Him that that means a child of God has the right kind of intimate relationship with Him? Well, you know that is not true. Here is a verse that shows you that the secret things belong unto the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever. That we may do all the words of the law, hiding that Word in your heart, putting it into your jewelry box.

Now I am telling you, your personal relationship with a personal Savior, based on personal promises, it is the only way you will ever have the passion of God in your life. It says in verse

29, "the secret things." Look at this: not only to you, but to your children also. Heirlooms for the family.

How many times have I seen a mom die or a dad die, and at the funeral, they all cry, they all weep, they all say nice, loving things? Then when you are back at the home, and Mom's rings, or Mom's necklaces, or Mom's bracelets, or the car, or how you are going to sell the house, all come up. It is World War III. I am telling you, how many times when Dad dies, there is a fight over the car. "I want his shotgun." "I want his fishing rod." "Well, I want his golf clubs." "Well, I want his ring." Guys, when I die, you can have all of that stuff and do with it what you want. But I am going to tell you something: I believe what it says there. I have never told my family what I am going to tell them right now. I have three or four Bibles that I have invested my life in, that I put everything in, and they have everything I have ever done. Without you knowing it, you would find them. If anything ever happened to me, and you go through it, every one of them is left. I have one left to you and Jason, I have one left to you, and I have the rest left to you. In front of those Bibles, it says, "This goes to this one, this one goes to this one, this goes to this one." I do not want you fighting over my shotgun—I do not have a shotgun. I do not want you fighting over my telescope. I do not want you fighting over the car. I know you would not. But I want you to have the heritage that God has given me of those heirlooms. I want you to look back five years after I am gone, 10 years after I am gone. God forbid—I mean, I hope I am not dying tomorrow. But I want you to look back and say, "Well, there is a date that Dad preached this." "I remember when Dad preached that. Look at that." I want you to look in there and go through and see all the things. See, those are my book of promises. Those are the things that I want to leave to my family as an heirloom. I am just telling you, I believe what it says. I believe that He is my personal Savior. I believe that He wants to have a personal relationship with me. And I know that they are based on these personal promises. This Book is the mind of God. The more you love Him, the more He shows you. The more you get with Him, the more He says, "Hey, let me show you this. Hey, let me give you this." I am diligent to mark it down for two reasons. If you ever saw my Bible that I teach Bible study with on Sunday or Thursday night, there are probably 100,000 or 200,000 notes in that thing. I do it for two reasons:

1. I want to know what the Word of God says, and I am so stupid, I cannot remember, so I have to write everything down.
2. I want to pass something on to my family. I have some heirlooms that I want to give them. It does not have to do with my ring because I do not wear any. My watch is a K-Mart 1995. Nothing there. I do not want anything of value left in this life other than the value of the things of God.

IX. Conclusion And Invitation

Now, folks, that is what it means. At the same time, I told you I had to use myself as an example. I am not putting myself up on any pedestal. I am as rotten and wicked as anybody you are going to find in this room. That is all. If you think I preached this just to show you how spiritual I am, then you missed my whole heart and you missed the whole point, because there is nothing spiritual about me outside of the grace of God in my life. I am just telling you, I am defining for

you. Because if we are ever going to do anything for God in these last days, it is going to take a personal relationship from a personal Savior, based on personal promises, because it is going to take the passion of God. There is no passion of God anywhere without what I just told you today. There just is not. There just is not. He is my personal Savior. I believe He died for me. I have a personal relationship. I do not think He even talks to you; He talks to me. Now, intellectually, I know that is not true. But you see, it may be just all Him and me going to get me through someday. I know this: I love you all. I love my family. I love everybody in this room. But I know this: we are only here because of the grace of God. Though God's program—listen to me now—is the church. That is His body today. The Word of God is written in a Book for every man to find out. I know all of that. But the bottom line is, in spite of all of that, the real purpose of Him coming down and dying was for Him to have fellowship with me. And you. But I cannot claim it for you. I can only claim it for me.

Do you know what the difference between this church and any other church is, or why we are successful and reach people, or why we do not? What I preach to you today... I can teach you all the doctrine in the world. I can show you why the Antichrist has four marks on the left side of his ear. I can give you all the ugly things that are great, or in Revelation 19. But if it does not come down to you not having a personal Savior and a personal relationship, filled with personal promises, we are not going anywhere. That is where it starts. What do you have in the jewelry box today? What do you have? Yet, at the same time, I know that many of you men and many of you women leave a legacy behind for your kids. I know that. I know that. I am not saying you do not. I told you I was not getting on anybody today. I am just trying to define something for you to have a better understanding. I love you. We are in this together. I know that the deep things that are in that Book God gives to me and my family.

Every head bowed and every eye closed. We are going to be done here in just a moment. We will be on our way. But let me just ask you this this morning, with every head bowed and every eye closed. I do not know where you are at today with the Lord. I really do not. I know that you love God. I know that. I did not preach this today to get on you or to make you feel bad. I preach this today because I need to define to you what it means, because we live in a world of misdirection and misdefinition. The message is sufficient for you. I am not giving an altar call this morning so you can all come down and get right with God. That is not my intent. You do that in your seat. But I do want to ask you this, with every head bowed and every eye closed. Is there anybody here—a man or a woman, boy or girl—who would honestly say now, and this is probably the most honest time in your life, "Bob, if I were to die right now, I do not know for sure that I would go to Heaven to be with the Lord"? With every head bowed and every eye closed, would you just raise your hand up and say, "Bob, would you pray for me?" and I will pray for you. You make any move at all, it will be your own move. I am not going to... but I just want to pray for you. I feel that the timing of this time and the Spirit of God demands that. Anybody? "Here is my hand, Bob. Pray for me. I am not sure if I would die right now that I would go to Heaven." Anybody? Anybody at all? Maybe you are all saved. I do not know. I just want to ask, and I want to pray. That is my job. Anybody? Anybody at all? Okay.

Father, help us today. Help us to leave here today understanding a little better what it means to have a personal relationship with You. To have You as our own personal Savior. That all that comes about because of the personal promises, the deep things of God that are revealed to us and become ours and our children's. That we hide in our jewelry box of our heart, that no one can ever get to, that no one can ever take from us, that nothing will ever enter into that that will steal it away. From a little one-legged ballerina gal in a box that danced around, my mom taught me a great lesson. That there is a place in our hearts that needs to hold the things that God gives us that are so special. Yet we live our lives missing all those special things when God wants to have a personal relationship with us. Help us to understand that. Pray for our church. Pray for our people today that are not here, that we spoke about already, and the lady that lost her mother. Lord, let us leave today loving You just a little bit more, loving each other a little bit more, and loving that Book a little bit more. We will thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.