

# Proverbs 2

Sunday 2/29/2004

If you have your Bibles this morning, again I want to invite you to turn to Proverbs chapter 2. The kids can be dismissed over here to the nursery. Kelly and Jamie are in charge of the nursery today. See you guys. Have fun. She says, "Where are we going, Mama? I don't understand this." Yeah, you're smiling at me. Proverbs chapter 2. Aren't kids great? You never appreciate kids really. Maybe this is just a man thing. Maybe, I think women appreciate kids, but for me, I am speaking for all men. But I never really appreciated kids until I had my grandbaby. I mean, I appreciate my kids, but there's something about a grandbaby. There's something about you have them, you just have a ball with them, and then when they get irritable, you send them home with your own kids. I like that. Anyway, I sure do love them.

## I. The Importance of God's Word

As you know, we have been laboring in the Word of God to really put together a concept of how to build a relationship with the Lord. We've been here in our church now over six months, and we have just really, really been focusing on that whole thing. We could probably stay on that until the Lord comes back, and we've got a lot of different aspects we want to try to cover. But right now, I'm trying to show you what the Word of God will do for you. I'm trying to show you how it is so important in the day and age that we live in to really get the Word of God into your life the way that you need to get it.

I don't know of a better way to break it down, and that's what the Bible does. The Bible breaks it down to the point where we can understand it in increments, in concepts. In Proverbs chapter 2, we have been looking at it, and we talked about what it means to receive the Word of God. We talked about what it means to hide the commandments in your heart. We talked about inclining your ear into wisdom and applying your heart to understanding. Last week we talked about developing your own prayer to God to teach you the Word of God. We went back to Psalms 119, those 176 verses back there. I hope by now that all of you have some kind of prayer that you just take to the Lord, because that's how you learn it. We talked about crying and lifting up your voice.

Today we're going to focus on verse 4. And verse 4 says:

*Proverbs 2:4*

*If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;*

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You today, Lord, and we ask You to take the Word of God, to give us wisdom and insight into all that we look at today. We thank You for those that have come today. May they leave today with their cup filled up, Father, from You. We know this book is Your book. We know that the love of God is for us all, Lord. We can just take this book, and by the Spirit of God, have everything that God wants us to have in this world today. Teach us, Father, give us wisdom and insight. Give us understanding, Father, in

all the things that we face every day by teaching us Your Word. And we'll thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen.

Now, I don't know if you've read any, we've been focusing on the first five verses here, but I don't know if you've read the whole chapter of Proverbs chapter 2. Because we're getting all of this stuff that we're talking about, that He gives you, because when you get down to the end of the chapter here, He talks about two elements in this world that are after you. Two elements that are going to try to destroy you. And He's showing you that the Word of God, doing the Word of God into your life, putting the Word of God into your life this way, will protect you from that.

Today, the two words we're going to focus on are "Seekest" and "Searchest." We're going to talk about your attitude of heart toward the Word of God. I don't mean your attitude of heart toward the Word of God that you believe it's the Bible. I'm talking about, what do you think about when you see the Word of God? What do you think about when the concept of you reading your Bible comes into your life? That's what I want to talk to you about today. Even when I get up and speak and I say, "Open up your Bibles," what comes to mind? What is the picture? What do you think about? What is the attitude of your heart about that book when you open it up to get something from it? And that's what I want to talk about today.

## II. The World's Pursuit of Riches

Let me ask you a question. You don't have to answer this. Have you ever played the lottery? I don't care if you have or you haven't. We went to Las Vegas many years ago when I was preaching out there one time, and we were down there on the strip walking around, and I lost track of my wife. Next thing I know, she was at the slot machines, and I had to drag her out of there. She's only... so I don't care. The lottery, no big deal. You don't have to feel embarrassed if I'm asking you a question. I want to make a point. I wanted to make you feel better by telling you, showing my wife, she's a gambler too. But anyway, the only sure thing she ever got in her life was me, but that's beside the point. I'm just kidding. Easy now.

But you know what? I got to admit, \$140 million does sound good, doesn't it? You win everything. What are you talking about? This girl over here, I don't want to tell you how much. She's got a phone system that works. What all of you won? Just a couple of big things. What does she want? Lots of prizes. A hundred? Trip to Disney World. \$11,000. Movie tickets, theater tickets. You know what she does? They have this call-in program. She has a place at work. They have a really fast dial-up system. She just sits there and puts that thing in. She wins everything. She has to change her name because they only allow you to win one time. 48 aliases. Now, don't take away from the fact that she's supposed to be working, but that's okay. That's all right. I'm all for you, honey. There you go. But I'll tell you what, she's the luckiest guy in the world. Next time my wife and I go to Vegas, we're going to take you with us.

But anyway, \$140 million. I remember a couple of months ago that the lottery jackpot was \$140 million. Now, I'm going to tell you, after taxes, you still had \$90 million if you wanted to go that way. I mean, think of that. Think of that. Now, personally, the lottery won't do nothing for me.

And honest to goodness, personally, \$140 million, \$90 million don't do nothing for me. Because over the years, I've learned some things about what the Bible says, and I'm telling you.

Most people I met when I was in Ohio, I grew up in Ohio. In 1973, two, someplace in there, Ohio started the lottery. And back then, all you won was \$1 million. I worked at a place called the Hoover Company. We made vacuum cleaners. And if you bought one that crapped out on you, that's probably the one that I put together. Anyway, I worked with a man who won the first million-dollar lottery in Canton, Ohio. Now, this guy, if anybody needed to win it, he did. I mean, he didn't have anything. He drove a car, he drove to work with a piece of junk. I mean, he was kind of a, I don't want to say this in a bad way, he was kind of a down and outer type of guy. And he didn't really have anything. And he won a million dollars. I'll never forget it.

And I'll never forget, he bought, by the way, when he won it, he quit his job. Now, let me tell you something. You may think a million dollars is a lot of money, but a million dollars isn't a lot of money. I mean, after they took taxes off, he only got like \$600,000. Now, \$600,000 sounds like a lot of money, but it really isn't a lot of money. I mean, if you win \$600,000 in your pocket, and you say, "I'm not going to work the rest of your life," well, just put the math through it. If it costs you \$50,000 to live a year, you're going to be having money in about 10 years. So it was a thing where he walked in and quit his job. He took the whole plant to lunch in the cafeteria, and he had a suit and tie on. First suit and tie he ever had in his life. He had it all on, you know, and this was his last day at work. He wanted to buy all his workers something to eat up there, you know. And he was telling all what he did. He bought his mom a car. He bought him a new car. You know, he bought his wife a car, and, you know, he wanted to take everybody out to eat. He was going to, you know, he had won a million dollars, and in his mind, hey, life is set for me.

And I'll never forget, he took his coat off, he had it on the back of the chair, and I had to say it, I said to myself, "Oh, I have got to see where a millionaire buys his clothes." I walked over to that thing and looked at the label. It was Walmart or Kmart back then. I said, "Something never changed." And that guy, I'm going to tell you something, in three years' time, in three years' time, he was divorced, he had no money, and his life was worse than it was before.

Now, I know, I know, and it's because of the way we are, and I'm getting ready to say something here. I know that winning the lottery and \$90 million sounds like a lot of money. But I'm also going to tell you, along with the \$90 million comes a lot of problems. Now, the simplest form of life in the Bible is just being content with what you have and let God take care of you and give you what you need. Now, that's the best deal. God's original concept was in a garden where He took care of everything. I mean everything. It was man that messed it up because he wanted to get technical and brought the curse on the earth, and now man has to do everything.

And I'm telling you, it's that concept that, I mean, the first city, we all live in a city. The first city in the Bible wasn't designed by God, it was designed by a murderer. God's plan is rural. God's plan is a garden. God's plan is the simplest form of life and just keep life simple because in that lies the contentment and the beauty of a relationship with God and life just doesn't get confusing. Do you really realize how confusing the world is today? I mean, look at your own life. I mean, our lives are absolutely complex. You can't buy anything today without having to go through a

checklist of everything in the world. I mean, it's incredible because our life is so structured and it's so unbelievably out of control.

And let me tell you something. When you win a lot of money or whatever the case, when that becomes your goal and you achieve that goal, your life just gets really complex really quick. I mean, first thing you got to do if you got \$90 million, you got to buy a tax man. Because you don't want to get \$90 million and miss paying your taxes and have the IRS coming on you because they will. Then you got to realize that, man, what am I going to do with all this money? Well, I'm going to have to put it in the bank. Wow, that becomes a problem because your banker says, "Well, the bank only insures this for \$100,000." You've got \$90 million. You don't have any banks you now got to find to put \$100,000 a piece in so you don't have them protected. Then you got to buy it. You got to hire an investor. Now you got a tax man. You have to find all these banks. Now you got an investor. Now you got to hire somebody to watch the guys that you hired to watch your money. And on top of that, your whole scale of living now moves up to a tremendous level. And the more levels it goes up, the more pressure you have. Where right now you go out and you spend \$10 and don't think about it. Now you have the ability to go out and spend \$10,000 and not think about it the same way that right now you have \$10 you can blow.

Now I'm telling you something. And you may not understand this and you may not believe this, but I'm telling you that it puts you in a... It just does more than puts you in a higher tax bracket. It puts you in a bracket where now really and quite very quickly. I mean now you buy a house that costs what \$100,000. Now you buy one. It costs \$5 million. Now you buy a car that costs \$10,000, \$15,000 maybe. Now you can buy one. It costs you \$90,000. Everything in your life suddenly goes up. And pretty soon when your lifestyle goes up after four or five years and you start taking trips here doing this, you're obviously going to quit your job. And you do it everywhere. Everywhere. All those things you always dreamed of now pretty quick. You start to get worried because you know what? And this is hard to believe. Hard to believe, but it's true. \$90 million isn't enough anymore. Just like the guy back in Canton, Ohio, back there in the 70s. A million dollars. And he found out in two years that it wasn't enough because it... I mean if you could just get the money and still live on \$40,000, \$50,000 a year, you'd be great. But who's going to do that?

And then you say this. "But Bob, you don't understand. But finally, okay, it'll raise everything up and I'll have more stress and I'll have to do all this. But finally, Bob, I can do whatever I want whenever I want to." Hey, that's what got us into trouble in the first place. Look at the trouble you and I got into doing what we wanted when we walked with just what we got. Magnify that by \$90 million. Whoo! And then they always say this. "Well then, Bob, I'd really give to God." Oh yeah, now that you got plenty of money and faith and trust in God is not involved. Oh, let me tell you something. Giving to God is never about how much money you got anyhow. It's about your attitude of heart. The Bible says this little widow over there, she just gave a widow's mite. God doesn't look at the amount. He looks at the attitude of heart of why you give.

And after looking at all of that, because that's where the world's at today, I'll tell you something else. Look at all the movie stars. They never get enough. They make millions and millions of dollars. Howard Hughes. Now, there's a case study. Howard Hughes was one of the most

unbelievable men in the 20th century. I don't know if you knew who he was or not. He was a pioneer aviator back in the 20s. He set new sound speed records with airplanes. I mean, he was an incredible guy. Started TWA or was involved in TWA Transworld Airlines back in the beginning. And when he died, nobody had seen him for 15 years. He was a complete recluse. He was the richest man in the world. He lived out in a high rise penthouse out in Las Vegas on the strip. Nobody ever saw him, never came down. He was an absolute curse when he died and they finally released his body. They said that his hair was down in the middle of his back. His fingernails were eight or nine inches long and curling, his toenails were the same way. He had bed sores all over him. And it became obvious from different reporters and different investigators that the people that were controlling his money kept him down. And they said that he had broken needles in his arms and his legs when they were sedating him over the years. And he was an absolute mess, the richest man in the world. His money didn't help him at all.

I'll give you another one. Martha Stewart. I've got nothing against Martha Stewart. She's probably a nice gal. But let me show you what it does for you. Now, here's a gal that's got millions and millions of dollars. Millions of dollars. Millions of dollars. In fact, the other day they said that she got the worst charge against her dropped. And they said her stock went up in ten minutes. Her stock went up, I don't know how many points it was, I lost count of the points when I heard the money. But it said in ten minutes she made forty eight million dollars. Just by her stock rising up those points when they heard that the charges would drop. Forty eight million dollars. Now, she's already got a lot of money. How much is her legal fees going to cost? I promise you it's going to cost a lot. And you know what, when it's all said and done, whether she sold the stock or not, I don't care. It doesn't make any difference to me. But here's the stupid part of it. She was rushing to sell that stock. Rushing the stock. Here's a lady that's got millions and millions of dollars. In ten minutes time she made forty seven million dollars and she's running to try to get an inside tip to sell this stock so she won't lose fifty thousand dollars. That's what she would have lost. When it's all said and done, what she stood to lose by selling her stock was a measly, a measly, boy do I throw words around, a measly fifty thousand dollars. But you see, millions aren't enough. You've got to have every dime, every penny. Oh, I can't lose anything. And you run around to save fifty thousand dollars. It's going to cost her. Who knows what. But in ten minutes time she can make forty seven million dollars. You know why? She's never learned the principle taught in the book of Proverbs that says, "Better is little with a fear of the Lord than great treasure with trouble therewith." I mean, contentment is something we don't have an understanding about today.

### III. The True Riches of God's Word

How do you view the Bible? No, I'm talking about how people view the lottery. A lot of God's people do. And I don't care if you play the lottery. I hope you win it. Just remember your old faithful preacher down here when you win it. But I don't care. I hope you do. You're never going to hear me preach a message on "Thou shalt not lottery." I don't care. There's lots of other things to worry about than that. And to focus on than that. You're not going to find me a nitpicker in your life. But I will talk to you about your attitude. How do you look at the Bible the same way as somebody that does that?

There are men tomorrow and even today that they spend all day long looking through the stock market report. Why, you can get it on your cell phone now. There isn't anywhere you go that you don't see the stock things running across the bottom of your television set. You go down to New York City and it's got an enlightenment anywhere you look. You can keep track of your stocks because boy, there are men that all day long that oh, that's what they look for. And that's where their passion is because they want to make a lot of money.

I like I always like Jacques Cousteau. I like that Baden Babbard guy, the guy who found Titanic. I love looking at things like that. Oh, by the way, the greatest discovery was ever made was made last night on History Channel. They found the original boat that Christ and his 12 apostles were sailing on in the Sea of Galilee. You hear it was. You know how they knew it was. This is the mindset. You know how they knew it was Christ's boat because it was big enough for 12 guys. Okay. I mean, with reasoning like that, our sky's the limit. This world's nuts. I've come to that conclusion. It's nuts. It's nuts. I mean, I saw a guy there with a PhD and an MA and a doctorate degree and they were standing around like it was a serious thing. "Well, tell me, how do you how are you know now that this what evidence did you find that this is the original ship that Jesus and his apostles were on on the Sea of Galilee?" "Well, first of all, because it was found right off the shore of the Sea of Galilee." "Okay. And what is the second reason?" "Well, because it's big enough for 12 guys." "Okay. Well, thank you very much. Well, with that in mind, let's move right on." I mean, come on.

But I like those things. Oh, I like those guys when they get down deep. You know why? Because those ships all had gold in them. Oh, yeah, man. And they get those robotic arms. And I mean, that one ship they were down there. I forget the name of it now. They did the whole thing because there was there was supposed to be millions and millions and millions of dollars in gold. And they went down through there and they got this robotic little thing that would snake down through the stairwells and get into the person's cabin there where the safe was. And they saw the safe and they were all yelling and screaming because they were going to get the gold. And then they sent down a bigger arm and wrapped around that safe and drug it out of the ship. I mean, incredible technology. Let me tell you something. If you go down in the ship and you're still alive and you need to be rescued, hope there's no money on it because they're going after the gold for they come for you. I promise you. And they brought that safe out and then they wrapped it around and in the divers in a hard hat that can go down thousands and thousands of feet in the ocean. They're down there and they put it on a crane and they carried it up and everybody was screaming and yelling. And they said, "Oh, we've got to go." They they anticipate it. And then in the movie, they said now. And everybody I'm hype because I want to see it too. They spent millions and millions of dollars in reputation because this is unprecedented. And they said now tomorrow night, we're going to show you how we found the next. Oh, man. Well, I mean, I mean, you just end the next night. I mean, the whole nation is watching. They opened up that safe. Finally got it open. And what a disappointment. Nothing in there. Wrong safe. Wrong quarter. I mean, life is full of disappointment.

I like I like if one thing I've never done, I like to do. I see those ads for those metal detectors. You know, the guy who's his wife says, and he's lost so much weight, too. I mean, tell you what.

And he says, "Yes." And I found the good stuff. He holds up this diamond ring, you know. And his wife's been a background smile like he said, "Well, you ain't get them." I'm going to sell it, man. We're talking about a walk around there, you know, and not even make them that it tells you what's down there. What about that? I mean, you can hear beer can't pop cap. Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, golden treasure, old treasure. Man, that's what I'm talking about. The excitement.

And I don't have a problem in any of that. I don't have a problem. You know what? I have one problem with the lottery. That's these fat guys that get in front of me at the stand. And when they buy six or seven of them, I want to pay for my gas, get on the way. And I got to watch this guy wobble back and forth because he's excited, scratching the thing off. I stood there one time and he, you know, a guy says, "Give me, I don't know. I don't know. Give me 30 of those scratch and sniff things." I don't know what they call them, you know. And he's right in front. You know, and I'll tell you something else. I mean, this guy's 500 pounds. I mean, and I'm saying to myself, you know what? The checkout. I got gas on pump four. I want to pay it. I want to get on my way. And this guy, he's in the attendant. You know, he's looking at me saying, you know, and this guy, he's up there like this. He's rubbing them off. And he's up when he's rubbing it, he's into it. I mean, I'm watching 450 pounds of blubber back and forth, man. I mean, I'm getting dizzy. And this guy is in his whole body just just jive eaten. And this guy is into it. And I'm thinking to myself, come on, hurry up. I want to pay for my gas and get out of here. And he's up there. And after he left, I paid for money. And the guy looked at me and said, "I'm sorry." And I said, "Oh, that's all right." And he said, "You know what? He comes here every Saturday morning and he'll buy 20 or 30 of those. He bought like \$50 worth of them. And he'll stand here and he'll do it." And I said, I said, "We did." He said, "We laugh at him." He said, "It's the funniest thing in the world."

And I'll never forget. I was walking out to my car and I was staying to myself. How stupid that was. And about that time, the Lord said to me, he said, "Now, what's your deal?" He said, "You know what? You want that guy in there get all excited and rubbing them things off and bouncing back and forth and just in the anticipation of winning that." He said, "What are you upset with him?" He said, "You know what, Bob?" He said, "You do the exact same thing when you open up this book." He's in love with his things. You're in love with yours. That's his passion in life. This is yours. And my question to you today is this. How excited do you get when you open this book? Is it like the guy at Quick Trip where you just bubbling with anticipation that you might win some great jackpot? Is it like the guy that goes and buys, you know, the pools at work, and they buy this and the guy buys, you know, the lottery is \$90, \$100 million and he goes out and he buys \$10,000 with a lottery ticket? And his chances are one in what? \$200 million? Oh, I got a book that's a lot of money. A lot better chances of getting some out of it than that.

But you see, we live in the Laodicean church. And in Revelation chapter 3, he says, because he's talking about that church, you don't have to turn to it. He says, you're going to turn in a minute.

*Revelation 3:17*

*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:*

Now, that's the church today. And because of that, that's the way the world is. The church is just as big a mess as the unsaved world is. There are just as big a problem as everybody else in this world. They're miserable, they're wretched, they're poor, they're blind, and they're naked. And he gives this church some great advice. And it's advice that I give you today.

*Revelation 3:18*

*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*

Oh, I'm telling you, what you and I need today in a world that puts all the emphasis on money and riches and all of those things, and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that as long as you keep it in perspective with the Word of God. And what we need today is, and what we don't have today is gold tried in the fire.

Now, you know what? Take your Bibles and turn back to Psalms chapter 12. I'm going to show you what that gold is at. I'm going to show you where the silver's at. You want a treasure chest today? It's in your attitude toward that book. There's people that get excited about the lottery, and they look at that thing, and they just can't wait. There's people that go out and buy metal detectors, and they just can't wait to get out and find what fell out of your pockets. I mean, they're just excited. Everybody's, these guys that spend millions of dollars to find that buried treasure. What I'm telling you, the greatest treasure this world has ever seen is most of you are holding in your lap this morning. He says this. Oh, look at this.

*Psalms 12:6-7*

*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.*

*Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*

Gold tried in a fire, my friend, is the Word of God. Oh, I love what he says here. "Tried in a furnace of earth." Tried in a furnace of earth. Tried in a furnace of earth. Go back to your Bible. Go back to Isaiah. Go back to many different places. Isaiah 48, 1 Kings 8, Deuteronomy 4, Ezekiel 22. You'll find it defined as that furnace, that furnace of earth. It's the nations and the people on this earth that were against the Word of God. They hated the Word of God and they persecuted the Word of God. And I'm going to tell you something. You can hate a lot of things in this life and get rid of it. You can hate this person and put them out of your life. You can do this, you can do that. There's all kinds of things you can get rid of that you don't like, but that Bible isn't one of them. That Bible says that heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away. And all the enemies of the Word of God do. All they do to the Word of God is the same thing they do to you. They purify it. They purify it.

He says, "furnace of earth, furnace of earth, furnace of earth." Every nation on this planet has been against the Word of God. They've tried to get rid of it just like they try to get rid of God's people. But God says, "You know what? That's the true riches. That's the real treasure. That's

where it's at. And nobody's going to take it away from you." And he says, "That is the treasure that I have given to my men and my women who love me, who are my children. And no one is going to take that from them."

And so when a Laodicean church gets into a mess and it focuses on the wrong thing. Notice the Laodicean church, he says, "I am rich." The problem is they got the wrong riches. They got the world's riches. And the world's attitude about it. They've lost the concept of contentment. They've lost the concept of being just having God and the Word of God as great riches. Now they think they got to have everything else that goes along with it. We build buildings down here. We build churches down here. We build this and we build that. Like we're going to live here for a million years. That this is our kingdom. This is not our kingdom. This is not our kingdom. I'll tell you one rule of thumb you better have if we ever build a church in this place. It is simply this. Don't put more money in a building than you put in the real church of the people that are in it. Make sure whatever you're getting in this church, the true riches are more in abundance. And there, it's an immediately dollars and cents you put into a concrete building someplace. The true riches.

"Purified seven times." Seven times. We teach out of the King James Bible. That's the only Bible we recognize as a complete infallible word of God. And I'll tell you why. Because my Bible says it's the words of the Lord are pure words as silver trod into furnace of earth. Purified seven times. I have an English translation called the King James 6 to 11 down through history of the church. This is the seventh English translation. First one was Wickliffe, then Tyndale, then Coverdale, then Matthew, then Coverdale is great. Then the Geneva Bible. And then it was the King James Bible. One, two, three, four, five, six. Purified seven times. The true riches.

You say, how is it purified? Go back to the Old Testament. How is it purified?

1. Nimrod
2. Pharaoh
3. Sennacherib
4. Nebuchadnezzar
5. Cyrus
6. Alexander the Great
7. Rome

In the New Testament, Ephesus, one, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira. I mean, seven churches, purified seven times. In the furnace of earth, the nations on this planet were against God, were against his word. And God said, "You know what? Get the right attitude toward the book because this book is pure word of God, like gold, like silver. And it's going to be purified in the furnace of earth seven times. And it's going to come forth pure. And young man, those are the riches you want to invest in."

*Proverbs 3:13-14*

*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.*

*For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.*

Oh, I like the word gain. Gain. You see, you make an investment. You got guys today that are going through the paper as already said, checking the stock market, checking their investment. Let me tell you something. At the child of God, wherever you're at with the word of God this morning, whatever you know about it or don't know about it, or wherever you are in your life is all in relationship to the investments you've made with that book and the gain that you've got on it. He tells you over there in the gospels, "I give this guy five pounds. This guy gave five pounds and he went out and buried it. He went out and worked it and did it and brought back five more. I gave this guy one pound. He went and buried in the ground, didn't do anything with it. When I come back, we're going to check and see what you did with the riches that I gave you." One guy says, "Lord, I didn't do anything with the word of God, but look how much money I made in the stock market." God says, "Wrong riches, wrong attitude." Somebody says, "God, I didn't have a dime to my name. I just barely scraped through. But boy, let me show you what I got out of this book." Right attitude, right riches.

I'm not saying you shouldn't make a living. Please don't misunderstand me. I'm not one of these guys that said, "Well, you shouldn't have a good living. You shouldn't make good money." I'm not saying that. I've never said that. I'm not one of these guys that try to put the hammer on you to give money to this, give it like that. I don't care if you don't give anything to God. Don't mean anything to me. I got no agenda. You say, "Yeah, but someday we're going to build a building maybe and then you'll," hey, let me tell you something. I believe this with all my heart. God pays for what he orders. And he don't need you or me to pay for it. I ain't passing out no commitment cards. I ain't after your money, but I am after your mind. I want to brainwash you. I want to work you over. I want to put you in a room with one light bulb and leave that light on all the time. Oh, yeah, you're laughing at that. But let me tell you, that's the way you get it done. Put you in a room with one light bulb. I'm mad this morning. I don't even know why.

I'm telling you, you and I today are exactly, exactly what ever investment we have made in the word of God. And I'm not fighting anybody, but I'm saying this. You need to understand that in your life, don't ever know more about what you do for a living than you do the book that gave you the life that you have today. That's all I'm saying. That's all I'm saying. I don't care if you play the lottery. I don't care what you do. I don't care if you go bet on the horses. I don't care. It doesn't matter to me. I'm saying this. I mean, I know you get caught up in that and I'm not giving you license to go out and gamble. Don't misunderstand me. I'm just saying those aren't the issues in life that I'm concerned about. I'm concerned about you getting the right attitude with the word of God. You know what? It's a lot like God's will. When you get the right attitude out of the book, I don't have to tell you what to do or what not to do. When you love that book more than anything else in this life, you're going to do what's right. I don't have to tell you. I just lay the word of God out and let God take care of the rest.

But I know this. I know this. Paul said in Ephesians chapter 3 verse 8:

*Ephesians 3:8*

*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

Now that's what I'm talking about this morning. I'm talking about the unsearchable riches of Christ in your life and my life. Oh, I don't care about the stock market. I don't care about this. I don't care about that. I'm telling you. The real issue today in your life and my life needs to be our attitude toward the word of God. And when you seek that Bible like silver and you search for it like a hid treasure, let me tell you something. God is going to give you some great things.

#### IV. The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

Oh, I remember when I was young starting out, God gave me those. He told me what those unsearchable riches were. I wrote them down my Bible 30 some years ago. I got seven. Maybe there's more. Maybe you'll find more. I found seven. That says Paul says, he says, he says, "It's a privilege. I can't to preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ." But I've been doing for 30 some years of my life. Years ago, I come through there. And the first thing I started this little study where I look for things and I'd find out what God for the real riches. I try to boil it down and get in my life all the things out of there. And all I need is the real things that are the real riches. And I'd find a concept and I studied in the Bible. Then God give me a verse there, but tell me what he said about it. And I would see it as one of the rich.

You know what the first one was? The first one was His gift. That's salvation. That's His Son. You know what he says in 2 Corinthians chapter 9.

*2 Corinthians 9:15*

*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

I can't even talk about it. I mean, I can't. I mean, let me tell you something. You can have all the money in the world. You can be the richest man in the world. You can be the Donald Trump or Forbes or whoever. Bill Gates, whatever. You know what? When you get cancer and the doctor says you're going to die in eight months, your money won't do you a bit of good. You can go out and go all the great places down in Mexico over in Sweden. Try this drug, that drug and all the experimental things. And the bottom line is when it's your time, it's your time. And God, you can't buy your way out of that. You won't buy your way out of that. Oh, His unspeakable gift. The day my Jesus came down and died for me on the cross. I can't even talk about it. I'm telling you the reason why I can't talk about it because there's not words to describe it. It's unspeakable that God came down and gave his son and God died for you and for me. Put a price on that. Go on. I mean, it just infuriates me. And I've told you this before. Men, preachers in the pulpit, they want to charge people to solve their problem, to get saved. I just don't understand that concept. I mean, God gave us a gift and it's an unspeakable gift. And if you could take the rest of your life and get all the money in the world, you couldn't buy it. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift. Unsearchable riches.

Then the second thing I found, money couldn't buy, but only this book gives you is His peace. We live in a world where there is no peace. Yet the Bible says that God's peace is past finding out in Philippians chapter 4. Past finding out. Try to study it if you will. You'll never get to the end of it. It's past finding out. Oh, it's the peace that passes all understanding. The Bible says it'll keep your hearts and minds when nothing else will. Try to take all the money you can amass in this

life and buy peace. I know that the answer to our short-term problems is to go out and buy something. That's human nature. I mean, we joke about women all the time, you know, "Well, go out and buy a new dress, honey, you'll feel better." But men just are as bad. Human nature is human nature. And our lives, if you don't keep it in the balance, you know what? When you get down in the dumps, you go buy something. All it does is take your attention off what you're down in the dumps about for a short time. And then, you know, when you wear the clothes a couple of times or whatever you bought, the newness wears off. The same old problem just comes back because it doesn't change anything. You can't buy peace by buying something else. Let me tell you something. You can't put a price. It's the unsearchable riches that God gives you. It's past all understanding. It's the perfect peace that Bible says in Isaiah that your mind has to be stayed on it.

And the third thing is His love. You know what Song of Solomon chapter 8 verse 7 says? It says that His love's unquenchable. That's a strange word. That's a strange word. Love unquenchable. Why? I believe the love's unconditional. I believe that God loves us, for we're unlovable. Well, we're unlovable. I believe that God loves me when I don't love Him. But I'm telling you, my friend, I'm telling you, the love of God is an unbelievable thing. I mean, there's people that buy love. Sure, there are. There's people that go out there, you know, as long as you got money, you got friends. They'll hang within you. The best guy, they'll slap you on the back as long as you're buying the drinks. I mean, as long as you're going through the process, you know, and you're putting a bill for every day, man, I'm telling you, they're with you. And the moment your money's gone, you're gone. I'm thank God God's not that way. God's love is unconditional. He's a friend that sticks closer than a brother. And when the bad times come, He's a brother that's born for adversity.

I like the word unquenchable. Strange word for God's love. You see, I studied that thing out. It hit me like a ton of bricks here a while back. Because the Bible talks about hell, fire and hell being unquenchable. When the worm dieth not, when the fire is not quenched. And He talks about unquenchable fire. When an unsaved man goes to hell, he burns for eternity and the fire is never quenched. And then I got it. The love that God has for me as His child is just as unquenchable as the fire is for an unsaved man who hates God. His love, His love, His love, His love is unquenchable. Nothing will take it from me. Paul asked a great question in Romans chapter 8 when he says,

*Romans 8:35*

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*

Shall death? No, it won't. Shall life? No. So right there, nothing in death, nothing in life. Angels? No. Principalities and powers that the devil and his crowd know. Things present? No. Things to come? No. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature. Because it's unquenchable.

And the next thing, He talks about His joy. And He says in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 8 that His joy is unspeakable. Now I'm telling you, joy is something that's missing in God's people's lives today. You see, joy doesn't have anything to do with happiness. Happiness has to do with the happenings in your life. If it's a good happening, you're happy. If it's a bad happening, you're

unhappy. But joy is something that is there all the time. Because joy, it's unspeakable. You can't get to the end of it because it's one of those riches, man, that is unsearchable that God gives us that you couldn't buy with all the money in the world. The very best you can do with money is buy some happiness for a while. But when it gets old, when you get bored, when it gets tired, when the money runs out, the happiness goes. Joy is there because it isn't based on anything that is earthly. That's why 1 John chapter 1 verse 4 says, talking about the Word of God,

*1 John 1:4*

*And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*

Talking about your fellowship. That's where it comes from. Joy comes from fellowshiping with God and the Word of God. It comes from spending time in the unsearchable riches. It comes from time of developing that attitude that when you look at the Bible, you look at it like Jacques Cousteau looks at a buried treasure. That the man with the detector looks for looking for diamond rings. That the stock market guy looks with the stock market paper. I mean, it comes from the guy like the lottery ticket that just gets so excited that he cannot, he cannot stop his body from moving because right under this thing and I'm scratching off, could be a million dollars. And when it's gone, it's gone. When you got joy, it's there forever.

Then the next thing is judgment. Romans chapter 11 verse 33 says that his judgments are unsearchable. He's perfect in judgment. You know, this is what I love about God. And this is where when you understand this, that you can deal with the issues in life because the great thing about God that he's fair and his judgments are righteous. And the bottom line is, if you can ever get to that point, then you'll realize that nothing will ever happen to you in this life that God doesn't allow. Because God's in control. And you know what? You grasp that, you can rest in that and you don't have to worry because you know, nobody will ever hurt you wrongly. Nobody will ever do anything wrong to you. Or you may think they do because personally you take it. But the bottom line is God allowed that to happen because there's one greater than anybody down here that can ever try to hurt you that's going to take care of you. And sometimes he just wants you to learn some things from what you've got to go through. It's like that old thing I taught you in Job where God had a message for Job. And God used the devil as the messenger boy. And sometimes God will have a message for us and God will use the devil to deliver the message. What we do is we put more emphasis on the messenger boy and miss the message. I'm telling you this, one thing, I don't care what you go through in life. I don't know what's going to happen to you. It'll be some good things and some bad things and hopefully it'll balance itself out. But I'm telling you this, nothing will ever happen to you as God's child when you're saved that God is in control of. And we'll get exactly what God allows us to have. And I'm telling you, you can rest in that. Maybe you can't today, but when you understand the unsearchable riches, you can.

Then the last thing is he himself, past finding out. The Bible says in the book of Job, chapter 11, God himself is past finding out. You can't figure God out. You can't figure God out. But I'll tell you one thing, he's got me figured out. You'll never figure him out. David said in Psalms 139, verse 6, when he looked at all the wisdom of God, the knowledge of God, and the unsearchable riches and all the things that he had come through, he said,

*Psalms 139:6*

*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

*Psalms 139:17-18*

*How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!*

*If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.*

Oh, I'm telling you, God gave you a book and your attitude about it is determined how you're going to get what God wants you to have. I'm telling you, absolutely true, absolutely true.

## V. The Key to Learning God's Word: Passion

You see, you're taught all of your life. You are taught all of your life that you learning the Bible has to do with you going to Bible college, spending thousands of dollars being taught by somebody how to learn the Bible. You've been taught all your life that you learn the Bible by spending hours and hours and hours reading the Bible, or hours and hours and hours poring over studying the Bible. Well, I'm here to tell you, and I've told you this before, I'm not saying Bible colleges are bad. And I'm not saying you don't have to read it. And I'm not certainly saying you don't have to study it. I'll put the bee in your ear every chance I can to study the Word of God, to read the Word of God, to labor the Word of God. And I'll take your places in the Bible and you can go places in the Bible where you can see incredible things. But I'm telling you right now, that is not the key to learning anything about God. Well, this town is filled with people who read the Bible every day and they're lost. This city is filled with people who study the Bible to a great degree and they're lost. That's no guarantee.

You see, the key to learning it, the key to getting it is seeking it and searching for it. And the key to searching and seeking is not reading. It's not studying it. It's loving it. It's loving it. It's having a passion about it. It's like looking at this book like somebody looks at the lottery ticket that he just won \$50 million. It's like looking at this book. It's like looking at somebody's bank account that has \$100 million. He looks at that and he's excited about what he has. I look at that and I'm excited about what I've got. I don't look at myself as a Donald Trump. I don't look at myself as a Howard Hughes. I'm a Jed Clampett. Remember the old Beverly Hillbillies? Old Jed Clampett? Down there in the backwoods of wherever he was? And all the time he was there, he was sitting on \$100 million right under the ground. Oil, black gold. And one of those days he's hunting for some food and up come the ground came that bubbling crude. And he was suddenly thrust into a millionaire. Well, I got news for you. Right in my house, right in your house, you got billions and billions of dollars in the true riches right there. It's right under the surface, man. All you got to do is dig down and get it. Dig down and get it.

I'm telling you, your attitude seeking and searching the Word of God like silver and for hid treasure. I mean, every time you come to that book, it's just like you just, there's a million dollars in it. God has for you. I mean, a million dollars that you've got and it just, it's unsearchable. And

it starts with his gift and his peace and his love and his joy and his greatness and his judgment and him himself. Oh, the unsearchable riches.

All my life. I've had young men and young ladies come to me and say, "Hey, look, I want to learn the Bible. I'll do whatever you want me to do. Teach me the Bible." I meet with them today in my life. I've met with them all through my life. I don't know the time that there wasn't God hadn't put men and women in my life that I helped them find the Word of God and find the relationship with God through this book. I've given away more Bibles and more books about the Bible probably than most bookstores have on their shelves. You know why? Because I when I find somebody that's worth the investment, hey, you talk about want to make the right you see you make an investment in here. And then God gives you people in your life that you can make some other investments in and boy, you get your investments compounding. You talk about you talk about you talk about a big fall at the judgment seat of Christ. Boy, when when all those revenues come home, I'm telling you, I'm telling you get the right attitude about the book.

And I've looked at that and a young man all my life and young all my life have said to me, you know, "How do I want to learn the Bible? Teach me the Bible. How do you learn the Bible? Show me." And I would take them into the Word of God. I'd show them the basics. I'd give them this. I'd give them this book. I'd give them that. I'd give them this. I'd say here, take this half my books in my library. I don't know where they're at today because most of you suckers got them out there. But the truth of the matter is lies in my favorite story. I've said it before. Most of you have heard it probably more than once. I don't know of any story I like to tell better than this one because I don't know any story that would trace my point better than this one. My favorite story. I'm going to tell it to you now. I'll probably tell it to my wife, right home today. If I wake up in the middle of the night, tell it to her again tonight. My favorite story. You'll hear it. You stay with me. You'll hear it a thousand times. I just hope it sticks.

Want to learn the Bible? You're convinced that your attitude about seeking and searching the Word of God is where you need. That's where the true riches are. I mean, we talked about receiving it, hiding it. We've come down through all the different attributes. Now we're looking at their attitude. What do you think? What do you think about when you hear the name, the Bible? Is it some old dead, dry, dusty book? Is it just one of a hundred that's on your shelf that you never read? Is there something that's got a nice little square mark on your coffee table when you pick it up from the dust? Or is it, as it is in reality, the true riches?

You want to learn it? Well, let me just tell you something. You're going to have to study the rest of your life to show thyself approved. But studying it isn't going to cut it for you. But you're going to study. Thursday night, we're going to meet down there. We're going to study. Boy, wasn't that a study last Thursday night? Who got me out in eternity so far? I couldn't even get home for three hours afterwards. I'm telling you. Oh, we have some great times. That's what it's about. That's where we take the things that we have and we focus on the Word of God, the study. And you're going to have to read. You're going to have to get a program where you put it together and you study and you read. And I'll be on you to do that the rest of your life, but I'm going to tell you right now. That ain't going to do it for you either, though you're going to have to do it.

## VI. The Drowning Man Analogy

Well, how in the world, Bob, am I going to learn? Here's how you learn. My favorite story. I love this story. I'm so glad you came in, but now you're going to get to hear my favorite story. I wish all the kids could hear my favorite story. They will. They stick around long enough. You know what? There was one day a guy, a lot like some of you guys, lived in a little city, a lot like Kansas City. And down there in that city like Kansas City, there was a great wise man. That's where the similarities end. He wasn't me. I was like you. And I heard the fame of this great wise man who could answer questions. Oh, who knew God and he knew about the things of God. And this wise man knew all of the secrets of the universe and the secrets of life to a degree that all the world wanted to come and hear him. Well, I didn't just didn't want to come and hear him. I wanted to be like him. I wanted to learn it. Oh, I wanted that wisdom. And I used to go and sit there and listen to him. And he would talk about things that I could only dream of. And he would lay things out in such an easy fashion that I could grasp. And I would go home and I'd say, "Oh, I want to be like that. I want to learn the Bible like that. I want to learn the wisdom like that."

That old wise man used to stand behind that pulpit. And he'd say, "Study to show thyself approved." And I would go home and study. I bought Arthur Pinks on Genesis, Arthur W. Pinks on Exodus, Joshua. I got every book I could find on all the books of the Bible. I went and worried my house to buy a set of tapes that taught me every book in the Bible verse by verse. And went after it. And for 10 years of my life, I labored to learn those things. And I came to the conclusion that that wasn't it. It wasted 10 years of my life. Not really. I'd hear that man say, I hear him say, "Well, you got to read it." So I'd read it and read it and read it and read it. That didn't do it.

But I wanted the wisdom so desperately. One day this little guy went to see the man with wisdom. And he said to him, "Oh, wise man. I don't know what else to do. I've studied. I've read. I've labored. And yet I've not attained the wisdom that you have. So I'm going to come and I'm just going to live with you. Because obviously that's the secret. I'm just going to hang out with you, watch you, live with you, and learn everything I can from you." The old wise man said, "That's not necessary. You just have one concept wrong and you'll be just fine. And I'll tell you what. It's one o'clock right now. I got a few things to do. Three o'clock, meet me down here by the lake. And I'm going to put it all in perspective for you."

Oh, three o'clock I was there. Oh, I was there. Called my mom, my dad, my brothers, my sisters. I mean, this is going to be a great coronation event. This guy was going to stand down here. He was going to say some words, lightning and fire was going to come out from heaven. And he struck me on the head and I was going to walk away as the wisest man the world has ever seen. I was there. Three o'clock waiting, shooting time. Because he was going to be a wise man, he got a dress for it, you know. Socks didn't match, but I'm not perfect. And he showed up. He walked out of that car and down to the bank. I was ready for the processional to begin. He said, "Come on kid, come with me." He walked down in the water. I walked down there with him wondering, "Oh man, just think twice about the lightning because we're standing in water." But I'm down here and he kept going out and I kept going out. He was taller than me. And he went out there and he stood up to here and I got up there and I was right about to here and I was looking up and

I look into those eyes of wisdom and I remember thinking to myself, "Oh, this man is now going to look into my eyes in part to me, the wisdom that he has."

Before I could say anything else, his big old hand bone hands reached up, slapped me on the head and shoved me under the water. I didn't even get a breath of air. I was too busy exalting myself. And I'm down under that water and I'm dying. Mindy, I'm dying. I'm drowning. Rosie, I know I can't get any air. And this guy isn't letting me up. And I mean, I feel like Jonah going down to the bars of the earth being wrapped around me, Lord, you know, and my prayer for God coming under me. You know, and I'm down there and I mean, I just about ready to go. And I'm thinking to myself, this was the dumbest thing to trust this guy in my life. And about that time he hangs me up. I mean, I'm dead. I am puking. I am gasping. I can't walk. I can't see. I can't breathe. I can't do anything. He dragged me by the scruff of the neck and pulls me over there and drops me down on the shore and stands there with his hands folded over me, looking down at me just like that.

After about 15 minutes of reposing myself, I was so angry. I was so mad. I had been deceived. I had been lied to. I thought this guy was wise. This guy is a serial killer. This guy takes young boys out and drowns them. I thought to myself, what in the world? And I get up spitting and sputtering and he just stood there. And I'm yelling and screaming and jumping up and down and doing all the thing like that. And finally, when I was done, he looked at me and he said, "You know what? You want wisdom? You want to find the truth of God? You want to find the Word of God? It's simple. When you want, son, this book, like when you're under the water, that you wanted air, then you'll get it."

Passion. Passion. Just stop breathing for about 15 minutes and see how bad you want it. When you want this book like you want air. When you can't stand it anymore. That you can't sleep at night. That you just, everything you see, you think of God and the Word of God. And you just, you get into that. When you start to approach that book like the gold mine that it is, you'll get the truth of God. Because the key in it, my friend, is not reading it. It ain't studying it. It's loving it for what it is and loving it like the very air that we've got to have to live. You can't live without air. And I'm telling you, you can't live without this book. That's why you have to seek after it and you have to search it out like hid treasure. Because this book is the true riches and you'll never get it anywhere else than here. Every head, body, every eye closed.