

2 Corinthians

Sunday 6/5/2005

If you have your Bibles this morning, I want to invite you to turn to the Book of 2 Corinthians. The Book of 2 Corinthians is probably, without a doubt from a practical standpoint, my favorite book in the Bible. I know from time to time we all have favorite books of the Bible as you are going through it, but I do not think there is any book in the Bible that really taught me the practical aspect of ministry better than this book. In fact, it is a book that those of you who feel that at some point in your life you really want to take your spiritual ability to another level where you really begin to be used of God in dealing with people, at some point this is one book that we will all sit down together and go through almost verse by verse to really grasp the great concepts here.

I know what I am about to say is not true, but let me just tell you my feelings on it. I wish I could say it was true, but it did not. If there is any book in the Bible that when you look at me as your pastor, I would want you to see in my life, it would be the Book of 2 Corinthians. Because I think that this book, without a doubt, is the handbook in the Bible on how to minister.

When we started the Book of Romans, I showed you how the Book of Romans was God's handbook on church doctrine, that there was no other book better in the Bible to really lay out the doctrines of the New Testament church. Then the next book we looked at, we looked at the Book of 1 Corinthians. I told you how that in the Book of 1 Corinthians you have a book that really you learn how not to do some things. Remember I told you the example of my own life how that there were two men in my life. One really taught me the ministry what to do, the other really taught me the ministry what not to do. Yet I have a tremendous amount of respect for both of them simply because of the fact that I have come to the point in my life a number of years ago that I can learn something from anybody. I never want to get to the point where I think that my learning curve is over and that I have got all the information that I need. Life is an ongoing process of learning, and the more you learn, the more you realize how much you did not know when you thought you knew what you knew. So it is one of those processes. So we saw 1 Corinthians and we saw the bad side of things.

Now here is what happens. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in the Book of 1 Corinthians, it is a church that there is a bunch of spiritual babies. We talked about that. It is a church where in every chapter he deals with issues that they are messed up on and really focuses on where they are at in their relationship with God and all the things they are doing wrong. Somewhere in the process, the church at Corinth decides they want to do what is right. That brings up another great concept really about the Bible because the number one issue of the Bible is restitution. He did not write the Book of 1 Corinthians just so he could blast them that they would never be worth anything. He wrote the Book of 1 Corinthians and it is blasting them so they get right with God so they would be worth something because the number one key in the New Testament church is restoration. Of course, someplace along the line through the process, the church at Corinth decides they want to do what is right. At this point, Paul writes them the Book of 2 Corinthians.

Now here is the beauty of it. Where chapter by chapter in 1 Corinthians, he shows them and tells us how not to build a church or how not to minister, in the Book of 2 Corinthians, almost to the same degree, chapter by chapter, he writes to them on how to do it. By doing so, chapter by chapter, 2 Corinthians becomes really one of the greatest books on the Bible to really teach you chapter by chapter that if you are going to be a minister, if you are going to, when I say minister, if you are going to work with people in the Bible, not a pastor per se, certainly a pastor is included in it, but not all of you will be pastors, but all of you should come to the point in your life where you minister the Word of God to people. You are going to find that there is no greater book in all of the Bible to define all of the aspects and to show you the character qualities that you should have. That is why I said earlier, if there is any book that I would like at some point in my life, that you look at my life and seem exemplified in my life by the things that I do, the way I do it, it would be the Book of 2 Corinthians.

It is probably the book that I spend more time in, I think about more, and I glean out of it more than any other book in the Bible from a practical standpoint. It is a book that I understand as a pastor I have to live in daily because these are principles that I have to put in, not only my own life first, but I want to be in the lives or deal with the people that God has given me in that aspect of the way that the Book of 2 Corinthians lays out. So we are going to go through it chapter by chapter. Please excuse the personal aspect to it. It is hard for me to teach this book from just a standoff way like I would teach Isaiah, even though I love the book of Isaiah and it is a very personal book. It is not personal in the way that this book is. So you are going to have to excuse my own personal bias toward this book, but I am sure that you will learn some things from it and I think that God will enrich us all as we go through it.

I say all I am going to say today, obviously there is no way I am going to do everything in justice to this book, but I want to whet your appetite, I want you to see it because many of you will be coming back at some point and we will spend a lot of time in the Book of 2 Corinthians. So let us go to the Lord in prayer and then we will start chapter one.

Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus. I love you so much. Thank you for the Word of God. Thank you for the book that you have given us. Help us today, Lord, to learn and to glean from this great book. Help me more every day to be the kind of pastor that you find in the Book of 2 Corinthians. Lord, I know that it is such a book that it just changes everything that we look at when it comes to people. Help us all to learn this today. Help me to be a good pastor to my people. Help me to learn this book more every day and apply the great principles more every day. We will thank you and praise in Jesus' name for the sake we ask it. Amen.

I. The Minister's Attitude (Chapter 1)

Now in chapter one, when you start to begin to read through this chapter, I guess in some of these I am going to give you a key verse. The key verse of chapter one would be verse four.

2 Corinthians 1:4

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Chapter one starts out and lays out probably the most important aspect of ministry. The most important aspect of ministry is my attitude toward the ministry or your attitude toward the ministry as you view getting into the ministry. Again, let me define for you that the ministry is people. The ministry is not, as many churches teach, many people teach that the ministry is ministering to inanimate objects. Of course, that is not true. True biblical ministry is you sitting down with somebody else or in somebody else's life teaching them the Bible. That is ministry from a Bible standpoint. I am not saying the other things are not important, but I am saying we have to define it from the Bible's definition. Ministry is one on one with people in the Word of God. That requires the right attitude.

Chapter one shows me as a pastor that I become one with my people through us suffering together. That is what he is saying in verse four, where he says:

2 Corinthians 1:4

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

That is a great passage. That great passage simply says that as the Lord suffered, and He suffered on the cross through the agony of the cross, we as ministers suffer with our people. Together, through going through whatever trial or tribulation that you go through, we all get molded into the image of Christ.

It does not take a rocket scientist today to look around Christianity, knowing we are in the latest in the church period, that you find that most pastors have ceased to be pastors. Most pastors have ceased to be pastors because most churches today have ceased to be biblical New Testament churches. The pastor has been replaced in the concept of the attitude. He is now a CEO because his church is no longer a church and his church now is a big business function. They look at people out there as anything except what God wants them to look at. That is why in the average Baptist church, and I am not talking out of school. I have been associated with it for 40 years. I know what I am talking about. The average pastor in the average church, if you had a problem, you could not get in to see him if your life depended on it. The only way you would get to see him is if you died and then you would not see him anyhow. He might show up to preach your funeral, but you could not. You know why? Because of the fact that he is so busy being whatever a pastor becomes, that he has not got time to deal with.

You know what it is a lot like? It is a lot like the dark ages. It is like he is the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church and you are the smurf down there that are in the little feudal system. The reason why they called it a feudal system, because it was feudal to try to get to talk to the pastor. That is not true, but it just kind of fit kind of nice in there. Because they are busy ministering. What they are ministering about, I do not know. Because I know this, the only true ministry is the people that are sitting in these chairs before me today. Any pastor who is more busy doing anything with anybody else or anybody else around the world, no matter what he thinks his great calling is, your first calling is being one with your people.

That is the issue. That is where unity comes in. You do not build unity in that church by you being down here and me being up here. I just yell instructions down to you. Do not get close to me and do not touch me. I do not want to really be part of your life. I just want your tithes and I want you to come to church so we can brag about my attendance. But when you have problems in your life, I am going to subcontract you out to somebody else. No, it does not work that way. The Lord suffered on the cross. He is our example. As the Lord suffered on the cross, as I grow in the Lord, I learn about that suffering. I understand as you grow in the Lord that you are going to go through tough times in your life. Together it is me stepping down into your world and us working the problem together and me bearing your burden. Sometimes you will bear mine. But in the process of that, that is where you build the character qualities of Christ in somebody's life.

Most pastors do not want to do that because that takes time. That takes commitment. It also takes a knowledge of knowing a little bit about the Bible, which most of them do not know. So you are not going to find that in a sense. But that is why I always look for a chance to help people with their problems. I do not care what problem, because everybody has struggled. Some people have struggle in their marriages. Some people have problems in their own personal lives. Some people have problems raising their kids. Some people find themselves in different areas and different variations of problems. I do not care. I know this, through you and I working together to solve the problem with the Word of God and me becoming one in your life and together with the Word of God and working through those things, that is where we build the unity that makes this church strong. That is where churches have failed today because the pastor has ceased to be a pastor. He is now a CEO of a large corporation that does whatever they do, but it does not include the one-on-one needs of the people. It is a sad state of affairs, but that is the latest in church in the book of Revelation chapter 3. That is where we are at.

So chapter one deals with our attitude as a minister. That attitude is, it says that I look at you just like I look at myself. I am not any better than you. I have the same struggles that you have. When you have a problem, it has to become my problem. We have to work the problem together through the Word of God, no matter what that problem is. Through that, the Word of God is built into your life, my life, you and I are closer together. You understand where I am coming from. You get my heart, I get your heart and in the process we all get God's heart. That is the way that it is supposed to be.

Now, let me give you a great principle found in verse 10 that really goes along with the attitude of the minister when you start to deal with people's problems. In verse 10, he says this:

2 Corinthians 1:10

Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.

Now that just sounds like a kind of a verse there that really would not have much to do with it, but that is a great concept. If you come down the preceding verses, you are going to find that Paul was talking about the great dire situations they found themselves in. There were times when they thought they were going to die. Then he comes down here in verse 10 and he gives a basic

three point outline that is what I use all the time in comforting people. For he says, first of all, in verse 10:

1. Who delivered us from so great a death.
2. And doth deliver.
3. In whom we trust that he will yet deliver.

In that little verse, you find the threefold aspect of my relationship with Christ because Christ has delivered me from sin. You see, when I got saved, Christ delivered me from the penalty of sin and I am no longer on the penalty of sin. So in that respect of my relationship, He delivered me from that. Yet the Bible says that He doth deliver me today. As I am standing right here before you, I have been delivered because I got saved from the power of sin. Sin does not have any more power in my life unless I allow it to have it. Why? Because I am a believer, Christ is in me and I have the Word of God. Therefore, not only did He past tense deliver me from the penalty of sin, He today delivered me from the power of sin. Then He goes on and He says, "will yet deliver us." The great news is that there is coming a day where even though right now I have been delivered from the penalty of sin, right now I have been delivered from the power of sin, bless God, there is coming a day where I am going to be delivered from the presence of sin. There is not going to be any more sin.

Now I use that great concept and I tell people all the time when they are struggling with things, a great lesson that we sometimes forget. That great lesson is I do not care what you are going through right now. Maybe you are struggling with some marriage issues. Maybe you are struggling with some own personal life issues. Maybe you have got some things that have happened in your life and maybe you are struggling with things. Maybe it is finances. I do not know. I really do not care to know. It does not matter. The bottom line is this. This is what I always lay out and always give them. God did not bring you this far at this point to leave you now. That is the thing you have to remember. Whatever you are struggling with. I know when you get in the midst of the struggle and I know that when you really get in, I am never going to make this message in an hour. See, I am telling you, this is where I live. I am sorry. I will tell you what, this may have to be volume one, volume two. I could just kind of kick it in gear here and get going because I am getting way off here. I am giving you stuff that, anyway. All right. Chapter 13. Let us finish this thing up today.

I always tell people this. I do not care what you are going through right now. I do not care what has happened to your life right now. If you are a believer, God did not bring you this far to leave you now. It is so easy when you get into the midst of everything that you lose sight of that because you are dealing with the burden. You see, it is my job to step into your world, put my arms around you and to say, "It is okay. God did not bring you this far to leave you now." You are not going to have to go in from this point on by yourself because not only is the Lord going to go with you, who is really important one, but I am going to go with you too. Now we will walk through this thing one step at a time, one day at a time, and we will fix everything that has to be fixed because I am telling you, God delivered you past tense from the penalty of sin. Today, He is going to deliver you from the power of sin. There is coming a time when He will deliver you

and me from the presence of sin that we will not have to deal with this. When you understand that great process, it makes a great promise in your life.

II. The Minister's Forgiving Spirit (Chapter 2)

Then we have chapter two. Chapter two deals with my forgiving spirit as a minister or your forgiving spirit as a minister. The greatest thing about God that is hard to comprehend by some people is God's ability, not only to forgive, but God's ability to forget. A lot of times, God's people cannot forget. They can try to forgive somebody, but they cannot forget what that person did. Of course, I have some news for you. If you can forgive biblically, you can forget. But if you never learned to forgive biblically, you can forget it. Because if you cannot get to that point where not only you can forgive, but you can forget, then you are never going to come to the place where the devil is always going to have the advantage in your life unless you can come to the point biblically where you can not only forgive somebody, but you can actually forget what they did.

Now, you know how God forgets what we have done against Him? By the way, a lot of people have a tough time with losing their salvation, and they think that when they get to heaven because of all the terrible things that they have done in the past, when they get there, God is just not going to let them into heaven. Well, I have some news for you. Here is how the first day in heaven is going to be after the rapture of the church for a lot of God's people. They are going to run up. Everybody is running around and screaming because we are in heaven, and in a right time. A lot of people are going to be so amazed because all they find up there are King James Bibles. They are going to have a tough time with that for a while. Suddenly you are going to see people over here standing kind of off and they are kind of shaking hands and hallelujah and everything. They are kind of waiting for the Lord to get alone and then they are going to kind of move over that thing, and they are going to walk up there and you are going to the Lord going to say, "Well, hey, Bob, how are you doing?" I am going to say, "Well, Lord, I am glad to be home to heaven. It is really good. But can I talk to you for just a second?" "Well, sure. What do you need? We have got all eternity. What do you want to talk about?" He said, "Well, you say, when I was back here on Earth, I just want to tell you, I know you know this, but I am sorry about that thing. It happened back there, and I did that and I am just really sorry." Lord will look down and say, "You did that?" "Yeah, I did. And then there was a time, and we were driving down the freeway and that guy cut me off. I know I should not have done that, but I, and I have done some terrible things before I say I did some terrible thing. I did not treat my family or I know I just." God said, "You did all those things?" You are going to say, "Yeah, I did." The Lord will look up and you are going to say, "You know what? I had forgotten all that." You know why? Because He has. You know how He forgets? He forgets it in the person of Christ. He sees every bad thing we did absolved in Christ and He forgets it. Does He really forget it? How can God who knows everything forget? He does not really forget. He just chooses not to remember anymore because it is in Christ. Everybody in this room can get to that point in your life if you get Christ in your life to that degree. I am telling you.

Now I am going to give you two of the greatest verses, three of the greatest verses in the Bible on the Christian relationship and your walk. Look at verse 14.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Now here is a verse that tells you that as a child of God there is something that you can always have triumph in. The triumph is understanding this, and this is why you can learn to forgive and forget, because you realize that once you get saved, first of all, whatever somebody does to you or against you, they are really not doing to you or against you, they are doing it to the Lord. So really in your fight, you are just representing Him. Sometimes we take things too personal, and this verse says that He always causes us to triumph. The reason it is, is because you have the ability not only to forgive somebody, but as you build the relationship with Christ the way that it should be in Christ, you realize that you can forget it because it really does not make any difference. The people who get hung up on little things that happen in life that they cannot forget or whatever the case may be are people who are letting the devil use them to a great disadvantage.

There is not anything that anybody ever has done, will do, or could do to me that I could not drop it in a heartbeat and forgive them and then go out and eat with them like nothing ever happened. You know why? Because, hey man, I am going home to heaven. It does not make one bit of thing in my life, brother. I can forgive you because the Bible says in Ephesians 4:32 that I am to forgive you like Christ forgave me, and that is the key. I can talk about somebody over here and say, "Well, I do not like this and I do not like that and I am not going to forgive them," but I will tell you how you and I did not look too hot first time God looked on us and He forgave us anyhow. Not only did He forgive us, but He forgot it, and in the person of Christ you can come to the place where you can forgive and you resolve whatever was done and you forget it. Do you ever forget it? No, you do not ever forget it, but it just does not make any difference anymore comparing to what all God has given you, and that is the key. When you compare one little thing that you are holding against in your life or whatever it is versus over the great things that God has done in your life, how can it compare? You know why? Because it goes back to what I said, He had delivered me, He will deliver me, and He will yet deliver me.

I will give you a great verse.

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

I have people come up to me, not for a while, but I have had people in the past who say, "Well, you know what? I am really offended at this," or heard somebody say, "Well, so and so preached

and that really offended me." I always give them this. A lady came up one time and she said, "I want you to know what you preached really offended me." She said, "I need to talk to you about it." I said, "Fine, I will be glad to talk to you, but before we talk, can I give you a verse?" She said, "Sure." I said, "I want to give you Psalms 119:165. It says, 'Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.'" Now, what is your problem? You see, when you love that book and that book is in your life, what is anybody going to do to offend you compared to what God has given you in that book? God's people are too thin skinned. They do not have a relationship with the Word of God where you cannot say anything to me that is going to upset me and let me lose what that book has. You know why? Because I do not get offended. You can preach anything you want to preach. You can say whatever you want to say about me. It does not make any difference. The bottom line is I know where I am at with a book. I know where I am at with God, and your opinion does not matter to me one way or the other in the sense of my relationship with God. I am going to change it.

I always triumph. A child of God should always triumph. We ought to always triumph because we understand that when we speak about Christ, when we talk about Christ, and somebody accepts it or somebody rejects it, it really does not make any difference because the Bible says when we speak Christ it becomes a sweet savor in the nostrils of God and God is pleased. The bottom line in this life called the Christian life is pleasing God. That is what it is all about. Do your best to exalt Christ. Just in the Old Testament as they took that sacrifice and they burnt that sacrifice and the Bible says the smoke of that offering of that innocent sacrifice went up and God smelled that savor of that sacrifice and God was appeased of His anger because something innocent died for something that was sinful. When Christ died on the cross as our Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, it was that savor that He smelled of His death of His Son on the cross that appeased His anger and gave grace to all men through salvation of His Son.

You know what? When you understand that, when you preach Christ and somebody accepts it or somebody rejects it, I know pastors right now that when they get up and they preach and if a hundred people do not come forward, they feel like they have failed. You know why? Because they have gained their whole ministry or their maybe their whole lives on results. I learned very young in the ministry that the results are not my job. I am not interested in the results. That is God's job. I am interested in the truth. I will take care of my job. God takes care of His job. My job is to put out the truth. God's job is to take care of the results. When you understand that, you do not get result orientated and that is not what drives you. You realize that you can forgive anybody anytime anywhere because of the fact that when you lift up Christ and what you have got in the Word of God overrides everything that anybody could ever say or do about you, and you have more understanding and wisdom than they do, and you realize why they are the way they are. That is just one of the greatest concepts anywhere in the Bible.

III. The Reality of Ministry (Chapter 3)

All right, chapter three. Chapter three deals with the reality of my ministry. The reality of the ministry is this: there are going to be some people who are not going to like you, and you better mark that down right off the bat. When Jesus showed up, He was the most perfect man that ever

lived. Never did anything to hurt anybody. Never lied, never cheated, never did this, never did that. Half the people loved Him and the other half hated Him. You put you and me in the same boat who are sinful and do stupid things that we do, and all the things that you try to do right, the bottom line is you just have to face it, there are some people when you start to minister the Word of God who just are not going to like you. Here in chapter three that is exactly what they are doing.

2 Corinthians 3:1

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

Now here is the issue, and this is hard to believe I know, but there are actually people in this church that do not want the church to turn around. Paul is writing this letter and these people are actually questioning who Paul is, by what authority Paul is doing this. Some of them even question his motive. What you have down here is that Paul, who is the apostle to the Gentiles, who in our day and age wrote three quarters of the New Testament, there is no way that we could ever come to the point where we could ever question who Paul was. Here in the middle of his day with his contemporaries, there are men, women, whoever, who are questioning who he is, should he really be saying what he is saying, because they do not want to do what is right. You have to realize that the reality of ministry is it would be nice in a perfect world for everybody to love God, for everybody to love when you get up and preach and to love the things that you say, but in a real world, the reality of life, that is not going to happen.

I will tell you this, as a child of God, and you older Christians know what I am talking about, you come to a place in your life where when you come to church and you get a good thrashing from the Word of God, it feels good. I mean, you get clean and you enjoy it if you learn to that point. As the Bible says that the heat that love of the honeycomb, even the bitter things are sweet, it is all good. But God's people who come to the point where they never got to that place, all they have to hear is one thing that is negative and man, they are off, and it goes from there. So if you are ever going to get into the ministry and you are going to work with people, you are going to realize that not everybody is going to make it. There are going to be some people who just do not appreciate a Bible based ministry.

I have come to the conclusion that any church, I know the church has a lot of fun social things that it does. It has a lot of family things that it does, and it is geared toward all of those things, and those all are important. But the bottom line, bedrock concept of the church is this: this church exists for really one reason, that is to expose people to the truth and then people react to that truth one way or the other. That is all the really the basic job of this church is. Every Sunday morning, every Thursday night, every time we get together, we open the book, we lay out something called truth, and people that are looking for the truth will say, "That is what I have been looking for." People that do not want the truth will say, "That is not what I am looking for." Now that takes different forms. It may take the form of somebody getting upset and mad because you said something that stepped on their pet peeve, or whatever it is in their life, but that is just the way that it goes. You realize and understand, you will be a big boy about it, that when you

take on a ministry, not everybody is going to be happy with you, and that is just the way that it is. Some people will love you, some people will hate you, and then you will find their group in the middle that just love to hate you, but that is the way it works and that is how chapter three lays itself out.

IV. Defining the Ministry (Chapter 4)

Then we come to chapter four. Chapter four defines my ministry. He says in 2 Corinthians 4:1, a great verse:

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

All right, now there are five things that the ministry is. The first two go together, and that is you renounce the hidden things of dishonesty and you do not walk in craftiness. That means that your motive is pure and you have no hidden agenda. You are not playing politics with anybody. You renounce the hidden things of dishonesty. You are honest about it. You do not walk in craftiness. Everything is open, no hidden agendas. That means that anybody can come to you at any time, ask you any question they want. They want to ask you about your character, what you teach, what you believe, whatever the case, and you have nothing to hide. You lay it out. You renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness.

Then the next thing is nor handling the Word of God deceitfully. You see that, teaching bad doctrine. That is not teaching and laying out the Word of God the way that it is supposed to be. Now the last two go together, and that is the manifestation of truth and commending ourselves to every man's conscience. I told you the bottom line of the church is to manifest the truth, and then your manifestation of truth, you commend yourself to every man's conscience. You know what that means? That simply means what you see is what you get. You are transparent. You live what you preach, and you do not have a set of standards for your people and then another set of standards for yourself.

Now that is why I told you that in this church when I get up and preach, my job is obviously to keep you accountable. Your job is to keep me accountable. We have that ability and that right to each other because that is what it has to be. Most churches the pastor wants to hold you accountable, but he wants nobody holding him accountable, and that is never going to work. We have to have an accountability factor, and the fact that what is good for you is good for me and me for you because we are all in the same together, goes back to chapter one, our attitude that we suffer together. So chapter four is an incredible chapter that defines the ministry, and by the way, that will be the definitive verse or passage in the Bible on defining the ministry in case you are keeping record of those things. So that is chapter four.

V. The Minister's Perspective (Chapter 5)

Chapter five, he talks about the perspective of my ministry, and the perspective is the judgment seat of Christ. We talked about this in great depth. We went through the judgment seat of Christ Thursday night, laying out all the different aspects of it when we define this concept of it. We saw in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 3, this is where you get the concept of somebody showing up at the judgment seat of Christ naked. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 11 is where he talks about the judgment seat of Christ for the child of God is going to be the terror of the Lord. Then he says in chapter 5, verse 10 that we are all going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. When you run this cross reference back to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, which is a definitive passage on the judgment seat of Christ, you see there that there are people who lose their rewards. You are going to Revelation 16:15, you find are people who lose their garments. Then you go to Revelation 3:18, you find out there are some people who lose their crowns, and it all comes down through there.

Now I do not know, but if you study this chapter, chapter five, you will find that there are a number of things here that will get you in trouble at the judgment seat of Christ.

- The first one is a person who loses their emphasis. That would be your purpose. Your purpose once God saves you is to build your temple and then take your temple to the world. Simple as that.
- The second thing is wrong doctrine. Bible says a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
- The third thing is a wrong attitude. You get caught up in loving things in this world when the Bible says you ought to be looking and I ought to be looking for the appearing of His coming.
- Wrong goals. We get saved and then we want to continue on with our plan instead of canceling our plans and finding out what God's plan is.
- Wrong perspective. When you get saved, that all changes.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

You see that verse tells you that when you get saved some things change. Now I do not know if you know what changed about man when you got saved, when you became a new creature, but here it is.

- The first thing that changed about man when he got saved, became a new creature, or woman, man in a general sense, is his purpose. The purpose of man when you got saved changes. Now you are no longer doing your own thing, you are going to do what God's thing is.
- The second thing was the passion of man. I see this in some of you. I have seen a lot of you. I see a lot of you guys that like to do things. Before you got saved, got into the Word of God, you could live for those fishing trips, those hunting trips. You used to live for them golf outings and all those things that now those things are somewhat important to you, but five

years ago in your life if you had a chance to go in the church to hear the Bible taught or going fishing, you would be fishing. Today if you got the choice, you will be here in the Bible. You know why? Your passion changed. My passion changed. I like to do a lot of things in life, I really do. I am kind of an all-around guy. I do not do much well, but I like to do it. But I will tell you what, there is nothing I like to do in this life better than sit down and talk to somebody about the Word of God or spending time in the Bible or hear good preaching. I cannot think of anything in this life that I would rather do than that because my passion changed.

- Then the patience of man changes. In other words, now he understands that he is on God's timetable and not his.
- The perspective of man changes. Everything is changed once you become a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things are passed away. The inner man changes. The outer man changes. You know why? Because the day you got saved, the end of man changed. You are not going to hell anymore. Now you are going to heaven. New lifestyle, new place in eternity. Everything is new.

That is my personal perspective of the ministry. I have got to view everything I do as a minister in light of the fact that someday I am giving account at the judgment seat of Christ. It is going to have to do with my emphasis, my doctrine, my attitude, my goals, my perspective. It is going to have to do with me understanding it when I got saved and became a new creature, my purpose changed, my passion changed, my patience changed, my perspective changed, the inner man changed, the outer man changed, and the end of man got changed. That is what we have to focus on, and boy what a great chapter that is.

VI. The Minister's Fellowship (Chapter 6)

Then in chapter six, in chapter six we have the fellowship of the minister. Truly today the great unknown concept of the 20th and 21st century Christian pastor and Christian is the concept of fellowship. We talk about fellowship always being a good thing. When I say good thing, I mean coming over to somebody's house, have a little cookout, having some fellowship, going to somewhere, we will all go down to the mission and do our job down there and then we all go to wherever we go and have a little bite to eat and have a little fellowship. That is good time, and I am not saying that is not fellowship, and I am certainly not saying those are important. All the time we can spend together is important. All I am saying is that is not the biblical concept of fellowship.

You want a definitive verse for fellowship in your Bible? It is 1 John 1:7, which simply says this:

1 John 1:7

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

Now the light is the Word of God. If we walk in the light, come on Darryl, go on down here and sit down. I am getting to the best part yet. I am going to whack you. Come on down through here, Darryl, my buddy, get on in here. I will just stand in the back saying, "Where am I going to

sit?" Come up here, sit next to me right up here. I love you, buddy. So when you start to look at this thing and understand it and you put this whole concept together, I am completely totally lost now. Where was I? Oh, here, chapter six, fellowship of the ministry. If we walk in the light, light is the Word of God, as He is in the light, we have fellowship. Then there is no fellowship outside of the Word of God. Now I am not even going to get into the fact that if you have got the wrong light, some of you have got a flashlight but you have got no batteries in it. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. Then true biblical fellowship is based on the fact that we are in the Word of God.

Remember I told you in chapter one the attitude of the minister or the Christian is suffering, being in fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. Of course, Hebrews 13:12-13, a great verse here, talks about how that Christ suffered without the gate, how you and I as Christians are to bear His reproach and to suffer with Him in bearing that reproach. This is what Philippians 3:10 says when he says:

Philippians 3:10

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

You see, we do not want to be in fellowship with bad things today. You know why? We do not want to be in fellowship with bad things today because we as Christians look at bad things and good things, when in the way God looks at it, there are no bad things. There are only good things. The only bad things in our lives are the dumb things you and I do. The bad things that God brings in our lives are good things. I heard a message one time when it said, "What to do when bad things happen to good people." It was a book. "What you should do as a child of God when bad things happen to good people." I thought to myself when I saw that book, "Now there is a man that does not even understand the principles of the Bible." But my Bible says in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good to them that love God. There is never a bad thing that happens to a Christian unless it is something he does stupid himself. God does not bring bad things into your life. That is how you perceive it. But you see, when you start reading a book about that, the greatest thing you get about that book, you get the idea that God does bad things to you. No, God does not do bad things to you.

But you see, we do not want suffering in our lives today. We want to do all the victory. We want all the good things. We want all, we do not want any suffering. Of course, it is the suffering of God and you are in fellowship with that that makes you conformable unto His death, that gives you the right perspective, the right passion and everything else that we talked about to bring you where God wants you to be. Without that, that is why very frankly, that is why the Laodicean church is the worst church all down through the history of the seven churches. You know why? It is the only church that was never persecuted for what it believed and had a nice soft easy route all the way. No suffering for them. They do not want any suffering. They want nice big buildings. They want billions of dollars worth of property. They want billions of dollars in the bank so they do not have to trust God. They want all this in the name of Christianity, and getting all that made them the worst amalgamated mess you could ever see in your life. So they left out the number

one key ingredient in our spiritual growth, that is being in fellowship with His sufferings, going through what you have to go through when God brings it in your life. You know why? Because He hath delivered me, He will deliver me, and He yet shall deliver me. See where it keeps going back to those things? Great concept, great concept.

VII. The Minister's Promise (Chapter 7)

Then chapter seven, the promise to the minister.

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.

Psalms 119:11

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

The promise of the minister is what is in the Word of God. The Word of God, the promises in that book, God gives to you, and those promises keep you clean because those biblical principles will give God's opinion on what to do and what not to do, and it will perfect you because it will show you God's mindset. Between those two concepts, that is the best thing that the Word of God and the promises do for you.

You know, every woman, I have never met a woman in my life, and it may not be exactly like I am going to explain it, but it is something like this. Every woman I have ever met in my life, from my mom, my sister, my girls, my wife, people that I have known, when you go into their house, they invite you over, if they give you a tour of the house and they take you into the master bedroom, one of the things you are going to see on the dresser there is a little jewelry box. Maybe it is not a little jewelry box in the sense that you open it up and when you close it, Cinderella dances around on top of it, like a little thing, but it will be some kind of little compartment box there. The reason why you do that is twofold. One, from my illustration, too, when they break into your house, they know right where to go to grab all your valuables in one shot. Can I tell you? But you know what you do there? Before you go to bed or before whatever you have to do, you come back from going out someplace, you take off your diamonds, you take off your ring, you take off this watch, you take off whatever, and you put them in that little jewelry box. If somebody, your kids make something, I have seen it where women have got little things that they got for their kids' birthday, they had little names on it. Sometimes grandmas get the things with all the little grandkids on them. So you do not want to lose it. You do not just put it on the dresser. You do not just do like men do and take the watch off or you are doing a shower and throw it up in the air and hope it will be up there you can catch it when you come out. Then you yell at your wife because, "Where is my watch?" You know how that goes. No, no, you have a little box where you put all of those things that are absolutely special to you, or some little place where you put it, some little bag, some little box, which we commonly call a jewelry box.

You know what? That is exactly what a child of God has to do. Your heart is your jewelry box, and when God gives you the precious promises and principles, just like your husband or your

kids or your boyfriend or whatever gives you something special that you want to tuck away that you do not lose, that when you take it off you put it someplace where you will know it is safe, that is what you need to do with those promises. Those promises keep you clean. The biblical principles keep you clean. That is why he says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." That is why I said, "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." The cleansing and the perfecting, all based on the promise that you get from God and what you do with them and where you put them.

VIII. The Minister's Character (Chapters 8 & 9)

Then we come to chapter eight and nine. These two chapters go together. Chapter eight and nine deal with the character of the ministry, character of the minister. Of course, the character of the minister is giving. Most pastors teach and want you to believe that churches exist so you can do something for them, and that is just not true. First and foremost, the pastor exists so he can do something for you: teach you the Word of God, minister to you, be there when you are going through a tough time, help you through whatever you need to do, wherever you are at, get you to the place where you can stand on your own two feet so you can do the same thing for somebody else. The key to ministry, my ministry anyhow, is to understand the nature of God through studying the Word of God. When I understand the nature and the character of God, I realize, as we talked about last week, the character of God is giving, and that makes me more like His nature, and so I want to give to others.

I have watched a lot of you do this, and I do not miss much. I watch what people do and I listen to what people say. You learn a lot about where people are at just by keeping your mouth shut and watching and listening. I watch you guys do this. I watch some of you people, it will be somebody that gets saved and there is somebody to start coming to church, and all of a sudden they will start coming and they really get kind of plugged in, and next thing I know, bang, they have got a brand new Bible. I will walk over to them and I will say, "Well, that is really nice. Where did you get that?" And they say, "Oh, so and so got it for me, gave it to me." You see, that is what I am talking about. Not just in that sense, but that is a great example. Understanding there is no greater gift you can give somebody than to give them a copy of the Word of God. I am telling you, you talk about something that is going to be eternal, there is no greater gift in the world than giving somebody a copy of the Word of God. When you give them something that is something that they are going to use the rest of their life, my goodness. But that is what I am talking about. I am talking about the aspect of the character of God is giving, and you looking at what you can give.

You find that all the way down through here because in chapter eight, verses one through ten, you have got the story, we talked about this last week, how that they were taking up an offering for the saints down at Jerusalem who were having a struggle. When you start talking about chapter eight and nine, everybody immediately goes to the fact that you are going to talk about money. But you know what? When you come down through this thing here and he starts talking

about the story of the saints in Jerusalem and they took up an offering because they needed the money, he says down here in verse five, long before he talks about money, he says:

2 Corinthians 8:5

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

In other words, the giving of money was secondary. It started a long time ago when they realized that the character of every child of God, and certainly every minister, is not to see what somebody can give you, but what you can give them, looking for an opportunity to minister and encourage and edify somebody else by what you can give them, by what you can give them, by what you can give them. That is what I am talking about.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Only two places in the Bible that you find where some man purposes in his heart to do something. One of them is here. The other one you can go look it up. Both of them are dealing with character. God's character, because you know what God's character is? Giving. We talked to you last week, God's heartbeat is truth, but God's character is giving. When you get that aspect of giving in your life, then and that character in your life, and you become a minister, you realize that you exist as a minister to give to people. You do not ever ask anything back. You are not giving to get. You give because that is what God did, and that aspect of character is in your life that you want to edify somebody else and help them grow. So you do for them maybe what they could not do for themselves at that time, and by doing that, you give of your own self first. Let me tell you something, 99% of being a good Christian is nothing more than you being willing to give of yourself first. If you are coming to the point that you are willing to give yourself first for whatever, the rest of it is academics. I can teach you the Bible. I can teach you principles of ministry. I can teach you this, that. What I cannot teach you is the aspect of being willing to give of yourself first. That comes based on your character and relationship with God. Either it is your own selfish thing about you or it is the nature of Christ, which is giving.

IX. The Minister's Mind (Chapter 10)

Chapter 10, the mind of the minister. Of course, he says here, boy what a great passage this is. He says in verse 4:

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Verse pretty much says it itself. The battle today that we face is the battle for your mind. That is what it is. You have got God's mind. You have got the devil's mind in this world, just like you have got God's Bible and you have got the devil's Bible. That is why he says in verse 5, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." Everything in this world that will exalt itself, notice, not against God, not the knowledge about God, but the knowledge of God. In other words, God has given you a book that has His knowledge in it. The Bible calls it the mind of Christ in 1 Corinthians 2:16. Paul told them in the Philippian church in Philippians 2:5 that we are to let this mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus. God has given you the knowledge of God in a book, and everything in this world goes against that. That is why we as believers, the mind of the minister is to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God.

You know what? I get them all the time in the mail. I will get five a week of seminars that people are having to help me go to to be a better minister. I get them color brochures, man, that look great. Must have cost them \$30,000 to do these four multiplex color brochures that have got all these great motivators speakers in it. I get them. I get little packets all the time that have got little pens in it that says, "You really want to build a church, give a pen away with your name, church's name on it. People will flock to get these pens." I get everything in the world. I have got people calling me on the phone saying, "We have just designed, Pastor, the greatest teaching that you have ever, ever heard on how to build a church because we know that preachers are struggling. We know the world is out there and we know that it is hard to build a church, and we have got this package together. We put together and let us send it to you free. You keep it, you listen to it, and if you like it, then we will bill you \$29,500 in five payments of \$100 apiece." You know why those guys make millions and millions and millions of dollars? I will tell you why, because God's men today have taken the most simplistic book that God ever gave this world to give you everything you need to know about building the church and replaced it with that kind of stuff. That is the problem. That is the problem as far as I am concerned.

I read other books, but I teach out of one book. I read other material, I preach one book. I believe that there is a lot of good stuff out there to read, but when I come into this pulpit, you do not see me a stack of so and so's over here. You do not start me starting out my sermons by saying, "Well, I read a great book this week. They are really good." No, I do not read a great book this week. It is this one, and that is all you need. I am not saying you cannot add some other stuff to it, but you know what? This is the book. When we come to most churches today, they look like very fancy dining rooms with great buffets with all the great food. You are out there and you do not like this coming down the line, "Well, I do not like fish, so I will have some chicken. Well, I do not like chicken and I do not like fish. Oh, they have got this, I will have this." They come over here and say, "Well, I do not like any of this stuff, and I will have some of this." Everybody gets to pick what they want. The most finicky people in the world eating those places. You know what? This is an old city union mission soup kitchen here. You are all a bunch of bums. We just have got one thing we put out and everybody has to eat it. We do not cater to your needs other than what this book does. We do not slice it up for you. If it is bitter, it is bitter. If it tastes like sliced sirloin, it tastes like sliced sirloin. But you know what? You serve one thing when you get

up to preach, and that is the living Word of the living God, and it will take care of every man's problem that he has got. That is what is wrong with the world today.

X. The Minister's Wisdom and Understanding (Chapter 11)

Chapter 11 goes right along with this. Where chapter 10 talks about the mind of the minister and talks about the battle for your mind that you are struggling against, chapter 11 talks about the wisdom and the understanding of the minister. What I am about to give you in this chapter is probably the greatest chapter or the greatest passage in all the Bible that tells you what is wrong with the church today. He says in 2 Corinthians 11:1:

2 Corinthians 11:1-3

Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Now he starts this chapter out by laying this story out about Adam and Eve, and nowhere in the Bible can I find a better story that illustrates, a passage that illustrates how the devil has and will attack the body of Christ, the church. The example that he uses is Adam and Eve, which takes us all the way back to Genesis chapter 3 and 4. We are not going back there. I will tell you the story. But here is what you have got. When you start the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis chapter 3, in those places, you are going to study from the aspect that you are going to find that Adam, and this is what he is talking about here, he is proving what I am saying to you now by using this as an illustration. Adam is a type of Christ. Eve is a type of the church. He is saying just as the devil beguiled Eve, type of the church, the devil is going to beguile the church. Picture Eve.

Now I always thought it was an interesting thing that the devil came to Eve back there in Genesis 3 when Adam was not home. You know why? It is a picture of the church age. Christ is not home right now. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. So the attack you have in Genesis chapter 3 when Adam has gone on Eve is a picture of the attack of the devil on the church while Christ is up in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. It is easy. You are going to find out in chapter 3 that when the devil showed up to Eve, who is a type of the church, Adam, a type of Christ, is off somewhere. When he shows up down there, Eve had already been given exactly what God told them. You are going to find that God gave them very explicit instructions in chapter 3 about what to do and what not to do. When the devil shows up in chapter 3, the devil shows up and his attack on Eve is simply to tell Eve, "God just revised what He told you and now He told me something else." He opens up his statement by saying, "Yea, hath God said?" That he changes what God said. You are going to find here in this passage that he talks about as the serpent beguiled Eve. You will find two beguilings in the Bible. One of them is in the Old Testament, that is a literal beguiling, that will be the nation of Israel in Numbers 25. Second, Colossians chapter 2, and you are going to find a spiritual beguiling, that is the church. Eve gets

beguiled. Israel gets beguiled physically. You can go back to Numbers chapter 25 and lay it out. Genesis chapter 3, the church gets beguiled spiritually.

All right, let us see what this beguiling has to do with. Simply stated, the church has been beguiled. Let us look what he says in verse 3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Now you see that thing? God wrote a Bible that is simplistic. Man wants to make it harder. Now I know this is an issue with a lot of people, but you know why I know that one of the ways I know the King James Bible is the Word of God? The world told me it was. Yeah, the world. The world told me it was. Say, "What are you talking about?" The world told me that the King James Bible is the absolute Word of God. Say, "What are you saying?" If you would go in a number of years, they did this in this public school system, I do not know what they are using now, but it was a time when they used what they call the Kincaid formula. The Kincaid formula was not a Christian thing. It was a formula put together by educators that designed to see how easy books were read to put those books in different grade categories. Somewhere along the line somebody took the Kincaid formula and applied it to the Bible, and they found out that the King James Bible was written on a fifth grade level. 95% of the words in the King James Bible were two syllable words, outside the names and places. That ended up against the ASV and found the ASV was a sixth grade language. Then he run it up against the New American Standard and the Good News for Modern Man and found out it was seventh grade. Then he run it up to the classical NIV and found the NIV is written in an eighth grade language.

You see what man does? He takes what God lays out simple and then he moves it into the complexity. You want to go off to be a pastor today? What they do is they take something that is so simple and make it so complicated that the average kid could never get. They tell you you have got to spend the rest of your life studying Greek and Hebrew, which are two of the hardest languages to learn in all of the world, before you can really have a relationship with God. The reason why they do that is because once you learn it, you can go back to people and tell them how stupid they are and how smart you are because they do not know what you do. So I will tell you what the Bible means. My position is I am as dumb as you are. You are probably smarter than I am. I am telling you God wrote you a book in a simplistic form that you can have every relationship with God that any man on this planet has if you want it. As far as the Bible's own dictionary, Bible is its own systematic theology, throw Schaeffer's out the window. Bible is its own commentary, Matthew Henry out the window. Bible is its own reference book. Bible is its own history book. I am telling you that Bible has in it, within it, everything you need. You do not need to go to a back of Strong's Concordance to find your Greek words. You do not need a Hebrew Greek language. You do not need a Webster's dictionary, though they help you sometime, but the bottom line is it all comes back to this. Bible is everything inclusive into itself.

Now I have observed this. I am not the smartest guy in the world, never claimed to be, but my only claim to fame, and I have said this before, I am the fastest one in the slow class. I have observed this. I learned this a long time ago studying evolution. Evolution is something that everybody purports today to be a true thing, and I found over the years that every heresy and every bad teaching, every heresy and every bad teaching, is going to have someplace where

somebody forgot to cover the bases. Let me show you in evolution. They go down there digging around, and they will find pieces of teeth, pieces of this, and they will say, "Well, man evolved from this and man evolved from that, and this is man back there." They will show you pictures where he is humped over like a caveman and then he is this and that like that, and then suddenly man is walking up here like a 20th century guy. They come down and when they lay all this thing out, they have something that they call the missing link, and that missing link has never been found, and that missing link has never been proven, and without that missing link, evolution and your life and my life just goes out the window. You know what they cannot find? They cannot find any evidence that man down here had legs like a tree stump and then suddenly the next fossil they find he has got two normal legs. They talk about it, but they cannot find any evidence of it. So they call that the missing link. How did man jump from a monkey and make the leap to his human? Where is any evidence between that jump and this landing where anything changed? Well, I mean, you find man normal here, monkey-like over here. Why do not we have any many monkey guys in the middle? That is called the missing link. You know why it is called a missing link? Because it is missing, and it is the link that makes it make any sense, and without the missing link, it all stinks, and that is the problem. Everything has got that missing link.

Somebody asked me a question the other day about dealing with somebody. Oh, it was Church of Christ. Somebody was asked me the other day about how to deal with a guy at work, dealing with the Church of Christ. It was Mindy was talking about a guy worked with Church of Christ, and I told, and she said he was going to talk about baptism for salvation, and I said, "You know what? When you want to deal with Church of Christ, always go to the missing link." The missing link is, here is a religion that believes that they are the only true religion on the world. You cannot go to heaven without them. That you have got to get the blood of Christ applied to your sins in a Church of Christ baptistery and a Church of Christ water system by a Church of Christ pastor, and everybody else on the face of this planet is damned and doomed and going to hell unless you are a Church of Christ. Pretty strong statement, right? That is not that I look at us, "We are the only one in the world." You know where you get them on the missing link? In other words, the bottom line, Church of Christ started in 1830, 1840 by Alexander Campbell, who was a mad Baptist anyhow, left the Baptist church and started his own religion. You want to get, you want to get a Church of Christ, get in the same way you get an evolutionist. Where was the Church of Christ in 1700? Where were they in 1800 or 1600? Where were they in 1500? You know what you have got? They say Acts 2:38 is our verse, and we are over here in 2005, and we are baptized. But, but, but, but, but, but, but, you know what you have got? You have got a missing link between the book of Acts to 1850 where nobody on the face of the planet ever remotely assembled, even looked like what you believe, what you believe. You know what I say to him? I take out my checkbook and I say, "I will tell you what, I will write you a hundred dollar check for every Church of Christ preacher you can give me, and I will tell you what, for everyone you give me, I will give you \$50 that believe what I believe, and you only have got to give me a dollar for each one of them. How about that?" You know what? I pull out my checkbook, never have a word. You know why? Because there is not anybody. I will give you a hundred men that believe what I believe. You could not find one person to believe what you believe from before 1840. You know why? Missing link, missing link, missing link.

I do not care. Mormons are the same way. Jehovah's Witnesses go around knocking on your door. Do not fight with them over whether they are hell or not. They are going to find that out very quickly. That is not the issue. The issue is why were there no JW door knockers in the 12th century in Europe? Amen. Why do you not have a copy of "Ye Olde Watchtower" that they were passing out in the 16th century? You know why? Because there was not any of them around. It did not start 1850. [Missing link.](#)

Now let me show you how this thing works in the church. You go off to Bible college someplace. You are going to class and they are going to say, "Okay, today we are going to teach you the greater points of angelology. We are going to teach you hermeneutics. We are going to teach you soteriology, eschatology. We are going to teach you apologetics." You know what? You go to school for four or five years, drop \$30,000 a year. When you come out, you come out talking like nobody in the Bible ever talked. Never bothered you, never bothered it. When Jesus got up, He never said, "Okay, boys, gather around now. Get the five thousand down here. After we feed you, I am going to talk to you about soteriology. I am going to show you about hermeneutics."

You know, one time years ago, I have got to be careful I tell this. You know, when you go off to a place where these professionals teach you, you are being taught about how to build a church, but they never built one. Years ago, I had a doctor friend of mine. He was a Christian. I liked the guy. He was trying to get started in his business. So I would go to him, and I had a particular problem. I cannot tell you what it was because it is embarrassing. Now I might as well tell you because all your minds are going off the deep end someplace. But I had a problem. I had to go see this guy. It was a thing where it was very discomfort when I had a problem, okay? I am sitting in his office after the examination. He comes back in and he says, "Well," he says, "here is what we need to do. We need to, in this very easy procedure, we need to cut this out." He says, "It is a very easy procedure." I said, "Okay, that is fine, doc." He said, "Now here is the only problem. I have never done one of these, but," he says, "I have the book right here that shows me how to do it." I am not kidding you. Now this was not major surgery like I had to be put under, but it is one of those things you do not want anything to go wrong, you know what I am saying? I said, and he says to me, "If you hold the book so I can see it." I said, "Whoa, time out. Hold the book? I will hold the line, but I am not holding the book." I said, "You know, maybe, maybe that first procedure you said about maybe just getting some medicine and taking it would help me that way." That is what I did. Now I can tell by your voice in this thing that if you went to the doctor and a doctor said, "You need surgery, but I never did this before, but I have got a book here that shows me how to do it," you would not be too comfortable with letting him operate on you. I take that your tens of this. Well, why would you go let somebody teach you how to pastor a church when they never built a church? Why would you spend \$30,000 a year to go to learn like nobody in the Bible ever talked, and when you come out, nobody can understand what you are saying? The answer is because the church has been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. That is why he never talked about angelology, soteriology, eschatology, whatever the case. He always put it out in clear everyday terms everybody could grasp it, that the most common man could walk away understanding the great truth of God. That is the way that he did it.

Chapter 11 is a great chapter that shows you the wisdom and the understanding of the minister, that what has happened today in the church, that God intended it to be so simple and so basic and so easy, and man has taken it and made it so complex. The missing link is how come all these guys come out of these professional colleges talking like nobody in the Bible ever talked? How come when they come out after learning how to minister, you cannot even understand what they are saying? How come when I go to their church, all I get is confused? How come all I get told is what is wrong with my Bible or what is wrong with me, and nobody ever really shows me what is going on and really teaches me the Bible? How come when I have problems in my wife and family, I cannot get in to see anybody because of the fact that they are all too busy? What is the problem? God designed it to be simple. Man designed it to be complex, and that is what has happened. 2 Corinthians chapter 11 is my wisdom and understanding and what the issue is today, and that is why going back to chapter one, that is why the minister has to be one with his people in suffering.

XI. The Minister's Humility (Chapter 12)

Then we come to chapter 12. Two chapters left, we will be done here in a second. Chapter 12, the humility of the minister. You know, we have got wrong ideas about humility. We think of somebody who is humble and has humility as a pastor that when you shake his hands going out the door, you, when you shake his hand, it is like you picked up a dead fish or somebody that is so wimpy you cannot even look in the eyes. Paul was the greatest example I know of in the Bible of humility, and humility by Bible's definition is the power of God under the Spirit's control. It gives you the confidence to do what you need to do. It gives you the power to do what you need to do. It gives you the encouragement and the tenacity to overcome whenever you have got to overcome. But the bottom line is you never lose sight of the fact that the only reason you have this power or whatever you have got is because God gave it to you, and that is the thing you find here in this chapter.

In the first six verses, Paul says talking about himself:

2 Corinthians 12:1-6

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

You know what he is saying? He is talking about himself and he is talking about the time that Paul got caught up to the third heaven and God gave him the body mystery. God said, and Paul says, "through the abundance of revelations," he says, "there was a danger in that because Paul was very careful not to have people think that he was more than he was." So he says in verse 7:

2 Corinthians 12:7

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

He said God took him up and let him see great things and told him those things on a personal level, and we are going to talk about some of that this Thursday night when we get into some of these other areas. But at the same time, God left him have a thorn in the flesh that balanced out all that was going on.

I remember years ago, I was just a little kid. My mom and I used to sit up late at night. We used to watch back then, it was, we started out watching the Jack Paar Show and then we wound up watching the Johnny Carson Show in the early days. One night Johnny Carson had on television the most amazing thing I have ever seen, and I still remember to this day. He had a talking dog. This dog was the most incredible dog I have ever heard in my life. I have never heard anything like it since. As a young kid, I, as soon as that program was over, I got my dog, and my dog was dumb, he could not talk. But this dog was incredible. They would sit down there and he brought him on there and the guy would ask this dog questions and it would actually speak back and answer. Now it was not like dumb things like, "What is on a tree?" and a dog goes, "Bark!" That is not what we are talking about here. It was not like, "What is on the top of the house?" "Roof!" No, that is not what we are talking about. This dog actually audibly spoke and could coordinate and talked in limited form, but it was incredible. This guy wound up making millions and billions. In fact, he did a story on him at some point after that. The guy had a big house over here, and one of the guys was interviewing him in his big house that he had made billions of dollars off this dog going around the world. This dog could talk, it was incredible. Then he went out into the courtyard, and there was a dog house that looked like the Taj Mahal, and the dog came trotting out, and the guy started conversing with the dog, and the guy was just absolutely amazed. All of a sudden that dog kind of rolled down on the ground and got up and started scratching and kicking his leg, and scratching down on his back with his hind leg, kicking his leg how they do it. The guy looked at the owner and he said, "I cannot believe it." He says, "You have got a dog that is worth \$25 million. You bought this place for everything and all the money in the world. This dog is making you millions and millions of dollars, and the talking dog that is worth a hundred million dollars has got fleas." The owner looked at the guy and said, "Yeah, that is so he never forgets he is the dog."

Now I made that story up. I never watched that with my mother. I made that story up to illustrate this point: sometimes God leaves enough fleas on us so we never forget we are dogs. That is why we struggle with some of the things that we have. God never wants you to forget where your roots are, so He leaves some fleas on you sometimes so you never forget you are the dog.

Because the greatest danger in the ministry is success, thinking that you are more than you are, and not realizing as Paul asked God to take this thorn in the flesh away three times, and God said, "I am not going to do it because I will be through the abundance of the revelations of what I have done from you, for you, through you. I am going to leave this on you so you do not become more in your mind than you think you are."

XII. The Minister's Brokenness (Chapter 13)

Then the last chapter, and this is probably where he brings it all together here. This last great concept deals with the brokenness of the minister. When you come down through this chapter, you are realizing, you get to see that Paul has such a burden for people. Paul knows and realizes, as I do and most of you do, that the ministry is people. Let us face it, we as human beings get attached to other human beings, and when people do not do what is right, it can break your heart. Three times here he says in verse one, he has come to these people and some of them just will not get it. You have to realize that you and I cannot make somebody do what is right. You can do all you can do. You can teach the Bible. You can be their friend. You can go through every suffering event that they have. But at the end of the day, it has to be between them and God. That is a great hard lesson to learn that in any building of any church or any ministry, it would be nice if everybody made it, but you know what? You are going to lose some people along the way.

I told you earlier on, this church really exists for one reason, that is to lay out truth, the manifestation of truth and commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. That is what we are here for. You are going to find that God uses this church to give some people a chance to change their life. Some of them will. Some of them will not. Some of them will say they will and they will start to, and then the devil will drop in an old girlfriend or an old boyfriend or give them this or give them that or the old friends will call them up on the phone and something will happen, whatever the case, and it will turn around and go the wrong way. It is a tragic thing, but it is part of the ministry, and you have got to understand it and you have got to deal with it. You have got to realize at the end of the day, you cannot make anybody do what is right. All you can give them, all I can do for you is give you the most honest shot I can. All I can do for you is to open myself up and say, "You know what?" I say it almost every week in some form or the other, I tell everybody on the face of this planet that I will spend an hour a week with you helping you put through the Word of God. You know what? For many of your lives, that is the key that would change your life, but you do not want to do it. Show me some of God's people, not necessarily some of you, some of God's people come to the point where they just are so, so, so determined to serve God without knowing His Bible. You know what? You are kidding yourself, and it is a hard thing, probably the hardest thing for me because I am a people person and I love people. The hardest thing for me is when you get your emotions involved with somebody that you want to do what is right and you see it coming, man, you see it coming. After a while, you see those little signs in their life. You see those little attitudes begin to pop up and you see it and you hate it. There is nothing you can do about it, and it is one of those things where you just have got to fall back on the fact that, you know what? God is in charge and God did not build this church. God is not building this church or allow this church to come into being

that everybody that comes through the doors will make it. Part of the job of this church is to just to put out truth and people have to make the