

1 Peter 1:9-11, 2:5-10, 3:1-9, 15, 21, 4:1-5, 12-16,
5:1-4, 6-7, 10-11

Sunday 9/11/2005

I. The Purpose of Our Church Ministry

As you have been coming a while in our church, you know what we have been doing. For those of you that are new to our church this morning, just visiting, we want to tell you what we are doing. We started our church a little over two years ago, and we got looking at helping young couples, singles, moms and dads with children, really establish their relationship with the Word of God. We believe what the Bible has taught for hundreds and hundreds of years: that the Lord is coming back. We believe that God's people have a responsibility to learn the Bible and to use the Scriptures in everyday life, in their husband and wife relationships, and in raising their children.

After being in the ministry for thirty-five years, I have learned that the biggest problem most people have when it comes to learning the Bible is that when they read the Bible, they do not know what to look for. They really do not understand what they ought to be trying to get out of the Bible. Most churches, and I have been associated with churches all of my life, take the position where the preacher preaches, but you are kind of left to your own to figure it all out. Of course, that will never work. That is why so many of God's people, young Christians, get discouraged. That is why they never really grasp the Scriptures and never really grow. This world, and I really believe this, is filled with God's people who have never grown past the day they got saved, simply because pastors, churches, and other Christians have never taken the time to help them really learn the Bible.

So, from the very beginning when we started our church, we took the position that we would teach the Bible, not only in a group session like we have now. On Thursday night, we have a time where you can ask any question you want to ask about the Bible. I also have a standing offer with anybody in my church that I will spend an hour a week, one-on-one, with you. You can come over to my house, and I will sit down and help you learn the Scriptures. If you want to do that as a husband and wife, that is fine. If you want to do that as a single, that is fine. It does not make any difference. My number one goal in this church is to help you learn the Bible. I do not do you any good if we have church every Sunday morning and we go through everything that we go through, and you do not have some place you can go to say, "Hey, Bob, can you break this down for me?" That is what we want to do.

We started by going through some material that really laid some groundwork for how you grow spiritually. After about eight or nine months of that, we started to go through the Bible book by book. I wanted everybody to have the ability that if you wanted to study a book in the Bible, and if you had been coming the whole time, you would have the notes. If not, you could get whatever particular book in the Bible you wanted, or get them all in a series. If you do not have enough money to pay for them, we will pay for it. I just want you to have truth. We do everything we

know how to do to get you the Word of God. I cannot make you do anything with it, but I can at least do my job to make sure I get it to you.

So, we started coming through each book of the Bible, and I began laying it out book by book, showing you how the Bible really fits together. I wanted to set it up so that whatever book in the Bible you began to read in your own personal reading, you would have an outline form so that you know what to look for. Remember I said when I started out this morning that the hardest thing about reading the Bible is knowing what to look for. I want to give you all those keys. I want you to be able to understand everything, how the Word of God lays out, and get it all together.

We have come through now, and we are almost through. Once we finish these books, we are going to continue our study. Sunday morning is our time where I officially teach you the Bible collectively, and we deal with the major issues that you need to learn as Christians in this church. Then on Thursday night, we deal with the overflow of that, things that maybe you did not quite understand, or things in your own personal Bible study, or whatever the question may be. Then one-on-one is where we break it down so you can grasp the concepts. I offer that to you. Adjacent to that, you all know we have the discipleship program where I pair you up with another person that is like-minded like you are, to teach you the basic building blocks of the Word of God. That is what this church is all about.

II. The General Epistles and Peter's Ministry

Today, we have come to the book of 1 Peter. When we started the book of Hebrews, which was two books back, I told you that these books are called the General Epistles. If you look through your Bible at the top, you will find that the first four books are called the Gospels. Then the next book is called simply the Acts of the Apostles. Then you have Romans, 1 Corinthians, right on down the line. You will find that the books from Romans to Philemon are all written by the Apostle Paul to the churches. When you get into the book of Hebrews and go on from there, you are going to find that these books are called the General Epistles. They are called the General Epistles because they are not directed at anybody individually. They are not to a man like Titus or Philemon. They are not to a church like 1 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians, Galatians, or Ephesians. They are not one of the early books that deal with the nation of Israel written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books generally form the transitional books that we talked about, bringing you from the Church Age through. We have talked about that the last couple of weeks.

You are going to find that when you come to 1 and 2 Peter, these books are again aimed at the nation of Israel going through the great period of time called the Great Tribulation period. Let me give you another key about your Bible. Your New Testament is basically built around two guys. If you can remember this, it is going to really help you a lot with the Word of God. The two men that your New Testament is built around are, first of all, a man by the name of Peter, and second of all, a man by the name of Paul. You are going to find that those two men have key roles in the New Testament church. Peter's ministry will always be toward the nation of Israel. Paul's

ministry will always be toward the Gentile and the Gentile church. You want to remember that. Those things are very important.

Peter, if you remember, all the way back in Matthew 16, was the man that the Lord Jesus Christ, while He was still on this earth, gave the keys to the kingdom of heaven. You will find that Peter uses those keys to give the kingdom of heaven and the Gospel with it to the nation of Israel all the way up to Acts 7. I showed you this when we studied the book of Acts. Israel makes its final rejection in Acts 7, and from then begins the start of the Church Age. Two chapters later, Paul gets saved, and Peter phases out, and Paul takes over. I say now, you want to remember, the two main men that your New Testament is built around are Peter, who will always be dealing with the nation of Israel, and Paul, who will always be dealing with the Gentiles.

When you get into Acts 15 and again in Galatians 2, when they meet down in Jerusalem to thrash out some of the problems they were having, it is very obvious that Peter is really the kingpin down in Jerusalem with those early Christians down there, where Paul is dealing with the missionary trips and going to the Gentiles. Out of that meeting in Acts 15, they come to the conclusion that Peter's ministry is going to be in Jerusalem, established in the New Testament church, where Paul is going to go to the Gentiles. That is what comes out of that meeting. You are going to find that all the way through your Bible, in the New Testament, Peter is for the nation of Israel, just like Paul is for the church. Therefore, the books of 1st and 2nd Peter are going to fit right into our transition that we have talked about that puts these books aimed at the nation of Israel.

III. The Theme and Structure of 1 Peter

The theme of the book of 1 Peter is the suffering of God's people in time of trouble. That is the theme of the book. With where we have already been and what we have already learned, you can very clearly understand now how this has that double application. Doctrinally, this book is Israel, the people of God, suffering through the Tribulation period. Inspirationally, it is a picture of you and I as God's children, going through the trials and tribulation of this life. So, it is one of those places that we talked about last week where even though it is not written directly to you, much of it lines up with Paul's teaching. Compare sometime the sufferings in 1 Peter with 2 Timothy 2:12-13 or other places like 2 Corinthians 1. We know, and we talked about this last week, that the Pauline writings, the Pauline books, are the books that really minister directly to us. Where some of these other books line up, then we can apply it to us. When it does not, then we have got to apply it to the nation of Israel. Remember, I told you the first thing that you will look for when you are studying your Bible is the context of who he is writing this to. So, you want to remember the theme, and you need to put that someplace at the top of your Bible there at 1 Peter at some point: the theme of this book is the suffering of God's people. That is the theme of this book.

Along with that, the book of 1 Peter holds one of the greatest keys in all of the Bible, and it is a great piece of this puzzle, putting together the Word of God, of why the nation of Israel missed the first coming of Christ. We will talk about that in just a little bit, but it holds probably the greatest key. If there is anything that the book of 1 Peter does for me above everything else, it

puts that piece of the puzzle in the great picture of the Bible of why the nation of Israel rejected Christ when He came. That is a key factor here we are going to see when we get into Chapter 1.

Let us break down the book. You have five chapters.

- Chapter 1 and Chapter 2: Deal with being holy for God and the suffering that goes along with it.
- Chapter 3 and Chapter 4: Show you how to have fellowship with God even though you are suffering.
- Chapter 5: Talks about how to give glory to God even though you have to endure through the suffering.

These are great themes of how that breaks down.

IV. The Key to Israel's Rejection: Suffering and Glory

In 1 Peter 1, we find a great concept here, and this is where I want to begin to show you this great key. But let us go to the Lord this morning and ask God to bless us.

Father, we thank and praise You for all that You do for us. We love You. We thank You, Father, for those that are here today. May the Word of God be real in our hearts, real in our lives, and may You do the work, Holy Spirit of God, that needs to be done today. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it, Amen.

Now, Chapter 1. This chapter has one basic message, one theme, but there are a number of support verses that go around this theme that are great verses. We could spend all day in Chapter 1, but I want to give you the main concept because here is your key. Here is your key. Here is your key.

It says in verse 9, I want to begin reading in Chapter 1, verse 9:

1 Peter 1:9-11

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

That is one of the greatest keys in all of the Bible that shows you why the nation of Israel missed the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and now has to go through the impending Tribulation period and get reinstated with God at the second coming of Christ. This is without a doubt the greatest key.

All of my life that I have been in churches, I have heard the teachings, and I am sure most of you have heard this. If you have been associated with the average Baptist church in your lifetime, I am sure you have heard this. This is what a man says when a man does not understand the Scriptures. When I hear a preacher say this, when I hear a Christian say this, I may have a man who loves God. I may have a man or a person who works their backside off all day long for God, but let me tell you what I also have: I know I have someone who does not understand how to put the Scriptures together. I have heard this all of my life. How many times I have heard that when somebody wants to explain the Bible to somebody, they say, "Well, in the Old Testament, they looked forward to the cross, and in the New Testament, we look back to the cross." How many of you have heard that in your life over the years? You have heard it all of your life.

Truly, no question about it, we look back to the cross. Here is the mistake people make: they make the mistake of putting our mindset into the nation of Israel. They make the mistake of not, at the same time, if you would ask the average preacher, the average Christian, "What is the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven?" they would tell you that it is the same. Those of you that have been around here for a while now, you know that it is not the same. We have taken much time to explain it. We do not have time to do it this morning. If you want to know the difference, see me afterwards. You can come over. I will sit down with you, and I will walk you through it. No problem whatsoever.

Of course, it is this failure to see the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven that leads to the bad teaching and the heretical teaching that the Old Testament saints looked forward to the cross, and we as New Testament saints look back to the cross. Any man who makes that statement concerning the Old Testament does not know his Bible. My Bible tells me all through the Bible, and when you come to Hebrews 11, which is that great chapter that deals with the nation of Israel, it clearly says in Hebrews 11:16 and Hebrews 11:10 that Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. He did not look forward to the cross, Christ dying on the cross. This passage in 1 Peter tells me very clearly and plainly that that was the main problem. They could not see the sufferings of Christ.

The Bible says that Abraham, as all the Old Testament saints, when they looked forward to the coming of Christ and the promises, it was not about Christ dying on the cross. It was about that millennial city that God was going to build the nation of Israel and give them. That is why Abraham looked for a city, not a crucified Savior. He looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. His kingdom was the kingdom of heaven. He is looking for a literal, visible Jerusalem that has a literal, visible piece of land that literal, visible twelve tribes dominate and occupy. That is what he was promised when he met with God back in Genesis 15. He is not looking for any Savior to come down and be crucified. He is not running around on the back of a camel singing "Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound." He is not going through the Old Testament trying to find and look forward and think about Christ coming. He is looking for a millennial city with a millennial Jerusalem with a king sitting on the throne. That is what he is looking for.

This is where the problem comes in. This is what the great key is in 1 Peter. He is saying down here in these verses that we read that there are two things testified in the Old Testament through the prophets. One of them is the suffering of Christ, that would be the first coming of Christ in

the crucifixion. The other one would be the glory of Christ, that would be the Day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ. One of the strangest phenomena in all of the Bible, reading the Old Testament, is you will find the first coming of Christ, the sufferings, and the second coming of Christ, the glory, stuck together in the same verses. They are side by side, and what he is saying here is that the Old Testament prophets could not figure it out. They were looking for a king and a military dictatorship to establish a kingdom. They knew what that was. They could not figure out what the suffering was. That is what the Bible says down here in verse 11, "searching what, or what manner of time." They could not figure it out, and that is what threw the nation of Israel off.

I heard one time, I read in a book Clarence Larkin wrote, and he illustrated it so pretty. He said, "If you are looking at two mountains, and you are looking at them straight on, what you see is two mountains, and it appears that you have one mountain with two peaks." If you are looking at it straight on, then he says, "If you get to the side, you clearly see one mountain here and another mountain here and a valley in between." The nation of Israel did not have the perspective that you and I have. They saw the first coming, first peak, and the second peak, and thought it was the same thing. Because we have the New Testament, we now have a side advantage, and we see that there are two different events with a Church Age in between, which is the valley. That is what Israel could not see, and that is why they were not looking forward to the coming of the Messiah to die for them on the cross. Their Messiah is their king. When the angel showed up in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they said, "He is the King," and they could not figure it out because the key, the suffering of Christ in the Old Testament, together with the glory of Christ, are stuck side by side. You see it in Jeremiah 23, Genesis 49; it is all through it. I could give you a hundred places.

Simply put, they could not see it for one reason. Do you know why? Because they kept getting other gods in their life. They kept getting away from God, and the reason why they could not see it is you are told in Matthew 13:14 that when Israel, at the first coming of Christ, He quotes a prophecy given by Isaiah in Isaiah 6 that says that seeing, the nation of Israel will not see, and hearing, they will not hear. Why? Because of the hardness of their heart. In other words, they could not see in the Scriptures the difference between the first coming and the second coming because they had sin in their life. They were constantly out of fellowship with God, and God would not reveal it to them because of the hardness of their heart. It had nothing to do with Christ dying on the cross. They were not looking for a crucified Savior. They were looking for a city whose builder and maker was God. They were looking for the millennial reign of Christ that was promised to Israel, which they will get, as we saw in Hebrews 8 and Hebrews 9. Simply put, they could not grasp it because of sin in their life.

It is no different than you and I. You and I cannot get anything out of the Bible when we have sin in our life. Do you understand? The key to learning the Bible is not your education. The key to learning the Bible is not your aptitude. The key to learning the Bible is your personal, intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. When you let the Holy Spirit of God dominate you, He will lead and guide you. When you have other things in your life that push the Holy Spirit of God out, you will not see any more out of the Bible than the Old Testament Jews did. They missed

that great principle because of sin in their life and the continuance of that sin, where they just would not follow what God said. When you take that path, the door of revelation becomes shut in your life and my life. God's Spirit wants to teach you as a young man and a young woman, as a mom and dad, whatever state you find yourself, God wants to teach you everything He has in that book. But it is dependent on your personal relationship and your walk with Him, not me. That is why I said I can make all the offers in the world to give you everything about the Bible, lay out the Bible in every shape or form, but I cannot make you do what is right with it. That is where your personal accountability and relationship with God comes in.

I cannot make you be a good father. I cannot make you be a good mother. I cannot make you be a good husband. I cannot make you be a good wife. I cannot make you raise your children right. I cannot make you do what is right in your marriage. I cannot make you do what is right at work. I cannot make you make the right decisions in life. All I can do is point you to a book that has every answer you need in this upside-down world to even your life out and make the right decision. But I cannot make them for you. I cannot. I can hardly make them for myself, let alone make them for you. But that is one of the greatest keys, the greatest keys in all of the Bible, to help you understand how it all lays out.

V. The Simplicity of Salvation

In Chapter 1, there are two of the greatest verses that I know in the Bible on winning people to Christ and what salvation is. I appreciate you guys so much. Nothing gets more exciting to me than when my people just want to learn the Bible. I had a couple that wanted to come over last week after church, and they wanted me to show them how to bring somebody to Christ. Another couple found out that I was doing it, and they said, "Well, can we come over?" I said, "Yeah, come on over." I sat down and showed them how to basically take somebody through the Scriptures, and I will do it for you, how to win somebody to Christ.

Let me just say this to you. Here are two more verses for you. These are great. Now come over here to Chapter 1, verse 18. Here it comes. It says:

1 Peter 1:18-19

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Verse 23:

1 Peter 1:23

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Now I want to confess something to you. Salvation has been made very confusing today. You can go to any kind of church that you want to hear, and you can hear every way to be baptized, every way to be saved. Some people teach you have got to be baptized to be saved. Some people would

teach you have got to join this particular church to be saved. Some people think you have got to do good works all your life to be saved. Some people think you earn your way. Some people think that you have got to be baptized in their church, in their baptismal, that their water has some kind of special cleansing agent that saves you.

I never understood this. I know I am just slower than the average person, but I have never met two clearer verses that clearly say that you get saved by the blood of Christ being applied to your sin through the Word of God, not by tradition, something that man makes up, not by something you do, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish, without spot. Do you know what that tells me? If you and I just had to get baptized and go to heaven, then why did He die? Why did He just say, "You all get baptized, and that is all you have got to do"? Why did He agonize and suffer on the cross? Why did God put His Son through the humiliation of dying naked on a cross, being whipped and being beaten, if all we have to do is just get baptized and you are okay? If joining a church did it for you, why did He die on the cross in such an agonizing fashion? Why did He not say, "Just join a church"? If good works would get you to heaven, why in the world did my Savior hang there from the sixth to the ninth hour while all the forces of hell ripped at His soul, agonizing where He cried out to His Father, "My God, my God, why did God forsake Him on the cross," if you just had to get baptized, join a church, or live good works?

To me, I do not see a problem. To me, I know from the two clearest verses in the Bible that if you are going to get saved, and maybe you want to get saved, I do not know, maybe you are thinking about it, I do not know. But if you ever do get saved, you need to know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things, that is silver and gold. From the vain conversation received by the tradition of your fathers, they will not save you. But with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb, without blemish and without spot. I hope you get saved someday if you are not saved, but I am going to tell you right now, if you ever get saved and you ever get snapped from the jaws of hell, it will not be by being baptized, it will not be by joining a religion, it will not be by your good works, it will be "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." Simple as I know how to put it.

I get asked all the time what kind of church we are. I say, "Well, we are a Baptist church," and that does not seem to do it for them because you have all kinds of Baptists. Somebody says, "Well, are you a Southern Baptist?" No. "Are you a Full Free Will Baptist?" No. "Are you a Full Gospel Baptist?" No. Then they always ask the question, "Are you an Independent Baptist?" I say, "No." They say, "Well, what kind of Baptist are you?" I am a Dependent Baptist. Have you ever noticed what is in the name? I watch names, how people name churches. They wind up being what they name it. These Independent Baptist movements started out good, but they got so independent, they got independent of God's Word, God's Holy Spirit, and God. I do not want to be independent. I want to be dependent on this book and the Holy Spirit of God. I am a Dependent Baptist.

Somebody says, "Are you a fundamentalist?" No, I am not a fundamentalist. "What is a fundamentalist?" Well, a typical fundamentalist is not what I want to be. He has no fun, preaches a lot of damn, and he is mental. Fundamental. That is not me. I like to have fun, and maybe I am a little mental. But I believe more than just the fundamentals. I am a Bible believer. I believe that

Bible is the Word of God from cover to cover, including the cover. I am not one of these guys that just say, "Well, I believe God inspired it someplace and then lost it along the way." Let me tell you something. I believe in God's mind from the beginning of the foundational world, He had a written Word that He was going to give to man in the Old Testament form, and then to complete a New Testament form that was going to be exactly perfect and without error. I am going to say this respectfully, and I do not mean any disrespect, but if my God cannot write a book and save it and preserve it and give it to me, then He need not be God. He is no different than Buddha or anybody else. The difference that I have as a Bible believer from any religion on the face of this planet, including Baptist fundamentalism, is I have a book that is absolute and perfect, and I can bet my soul on it. If you do not have that, then you do not have anything that the rest of them do not have. I have a book, brother, that is bought and paid for with blood, that I would not even know there was salvation through the blood of Christ, and it tells you, verse 23, "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." I have the incorruptible seed.

Somebody says, "Well, there are errors in your Bible." I had a Christian tell me one time there were errors. A man of God told me that there were errors in my Bible, just like he was talking about some encyclopedia or Britannica or someplace. There are no errors in my Bible. My God gave me a Bible that is perfect and complete. Do you know why? Because that is the only way. It is the incorruptible seed. I do not know what one he had. Mine is incorruptible. It is perfect. I will tell you why, because through it is where my salvation is found. God could not keep it straight when He wrote some of these things down. How do you know He kept it straight in the verses to tell you how to get to heaven? No, no, no. You do what you want to do, little fellow. I have a book that God gave me that is from heaven. It parachuted down from heaven, landed in my backyard, and I have got it. I am sorry about you. He says it is "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." If you are not saved here this morning, if there has never been a time you have ever given your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you do not know for today if you would die today you would go to heaven, I hope someday you will find Christ. I hope someday you will find Him as your own personal Savior, but I am going to tell you right now, if you ever get it, you are going to have to get it by the book. No other way to get it.

VI. Why God Rejected and Will Restore Israel

Then we come into Chapter 2. Chapter 2 is a great study. So far, you have been able to see how we have been able to apply these things both ways. When we get into Chapter 2, we cannot do that. Chapter 2 is a great study on why God rejected Israel and then how God is going to restore them at the end of the Tribulation period. You and I know that we are living in the times right now. I hardly expect to get through this service this morning before the Rapture comes. I believe that is that close. I believe the Middle East and everything that is going on in this world, and I believe the nation of Israel and the Middle East and the terrorist attacks and all the things, there is no question about that, that it is built around a format that God is structuring things because God is on a timetable. There is no greater place in the Bible to see why God rejected the nation of Israel and then how He is going to restore them.

Starting in verse 5 of Chapter 2, read along with me. This sounds confusing. I am going to read it, and I am going to break it down real easy for you.

1 Peter 2:5-10

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

That is a lot of verses here. Let me tell you what he is saying. This is a great passage. If you remember our Thursday night as we came through topical studies, we talked about this. Here is what he is saying. This is real easy. Let me break it down for you.

1. First of all, in verse 5, here is what he is saying: God wants the nation of Israel to be a great spiritual house. When God called Abraham out back in the book of Genesis, He says, "I am going to make you a great and mighty nation." God's plan has not changed. Israel has rejected God. Israel has thrown God off. So God now has to deal with them in a different way, but God promises to Israel, God is going to establish them as a great spiritual house. That is why all through the Old Testament into the book of Acts and in the book of Hebrews 8 and 9, you find the nation of Israel called the house of Israel. That is the house.
2. All right, verse 6. This house, Israel, that God is going to build, started building in Genesis 15. As all houses built, it has to have a cornerstone. Now the cornerstone is the main brick or the main block or the main corner from which you start the building, and then the building is tied into it from there. It is called the chief cornerstone. In our study, that will be the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, when God wanted to build this house, He sent them a man that this house was going to be the chief cornerstone of which this house would be built. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. You see it in Matthew 21:42. You see it in Romans 11:7. This cornerstone, the builders, the leaders of the nation of Israel, disallowed. What does that mean? It means they rejected Him. That is the first coming of Christ. This whole thing is a picture of the nation of Israel being in sin, God wanting to build them as a spiritual house, a great spiritual house, sending them the Lord Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone on which He was going to

build the house of Israel, and the builders disallowed it, and they crucified Him. What happens?

By the way, this is the whole back of Peter's preaching in Acts 2. Remember I told you Peter is to the nation of Israel, and from Acts 1, Acts 2, 3, 4, 5, all the way up to Acts 7, Peter is preaching all the sermons. This is why when he preaches to the nation of Israel, it says down here in verse 7, look at it. It says in verse 7:

1 Peter 2:7

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

Do you know what Peter said when he was preaching in Acts 2 to the nation of Israel? He said this, he says, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36). Do you know what he is saying? He is saying, "Israel, God wants to make you a holy nation, a holy house, and He sent you His Son to be the cornerstone. You rejected Him, you killed Him, and this same cornerstone that you rejected, that the builders disallowed, God is going to take this same Jesus and make Him Lord and Christ." What is He making Him? Chief cornerstone. That is what He made Him.

3. Now it goes on in verse 8 and it says, and here it comes, here it comes, the chief cornerstone was Christ that they rejected, they killed Him, now becomes a stone of stumbling. Now becomes a rock of offense. The Old Testament passage here will be Isaiah 8:14. Now, God, it is the same way with you and me. You hear about Christ coming down and dying on a cross for your sins. You reject it and go your own way. That same stone that God sent you to become eternal life now becomes your tombstone. You reject Him, He is going to reject you. It is as simple as that. Israel rejected Him. Now, the rock that God sent them that was going to be the chief cornerstone of the building of the nation of Israel now becomes a stone of stumbling. They break their neck over it. It becomes a rock of offense. They hate the name of Jesus today.

Finally, when you come into Daniel 2, you will find the great Gentile nations coming down through history, culminating there at the second coming of Christ. This smiting stone, this stone that was the corner, whom the builders rejected, who became a stone of stumbling, became a rock of offense. You will find in Daniel 2, it becomes the stone made without hands in Daniel 2:45, and it becomes the smiting stone of Daniel 2, which breaks the feet of the Antichrist and all of the world kingdoms at the second coming of Christ. Oh, what a great chapter that is to show us exactly how God is dealing and why He is dealing with the nation of Israel. He sent them the rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the head cornerstone of the nation of Israel. They rejected it. That same stone they rejected becomes the same stone they trip over. A rock of offense, what winds up becoming the smiting stone that destroys the world at the second coming of Christ.

He says in verse 9, "You are a chosen generation," that is Israel. "A royal priesthood," that is Israel. He says, "You are a holy nation," that is Israel. He says, "You are a peculiar people," that is what Israel is to be. Then he says in verse 12, just in case you could not miss it:

1 Peter 2:12

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Now for most Baptists, the day of visitation is Thursday night. That is not what we are talking about here. The day of visitation is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, defined in Isaiah 10:3. The day of visitation is the day that Jesus Christ comes back to visit this world. That is one day you do not want to be home when the visitation person knocks on your door. You want to have gone in the Rapture, and nobody home is a good thing on this day. This day in the Bible, the day of visitation, will always be the second coming of Christ. It is at the second coming, and what he is saying in verse 12, that at the second coming of Christ, all the Gentile world will know who the Jews are as God's people. This is exactly as it is laid out in Hebrews 8, Hebrews 9, and our great chapter, if you remember from Thursday night, in Zechariah 14.

VII. The Inner Man and Outward Adorning

Now we come to Chapter 3. Chapter 3 is a principle that can apply either way. Chapter 3 basically shows that the true relationship with God is what is on the inside, not on the outside. This is something that God's people have a tough time with. He says there in Chapter 3, verse 1:

1 Peter 3:1-4

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

1 Peter 3:7-9

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

This thing breaks down here in three things of instruction.

4. Verses 1 through 6: He gives instruction to the wives.
5. Verse 7: He gives instruction to the husbands.
6. Verse 8 through the end, or down through verse 22: He gives general instruction for everybody.

Time and again, guys that preach this miss the point. We do not want to miss the point today because the point is a very important point. How many times have I heard a preacher get up and he says, he quotes out verse 3, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." Before he gets any farther, all the men yell, "Amen! Glory to God!" because they think that is a verse they can beat their wives over the head with: "You need to be in subjection. So if I want to go out and buy a \$65,000 motorboat, we have not got it, you have got to be in subjection." That is not what it is saying. That is not what it is saying.

Then he gives instruction to the husbands. Then in verse 8 through 22, he gives general instruction to everybody. Of course, you have got to see what the point is here. I have heard, I do not know how many times I have heard, in fact, it was last Saturday morning or Sunday morning, I forget, I was flipping through the thing there, I would like to see if the world is still around when I get up in the morning, you never know. I was blowing through there, and there was some old guy on there preaching, and he was talking about verse 3, "Whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning of the plaiting of hair and the wearing of gold." He was preaching that women should not fix their hair and should never wear any gold because it is worldly. I sat there, and then the camera panned down, and I saw that most of the women obeyed what he said. Because they did not have any hair fixed, and they did not have any gold on. It looked like a bunch of dead people walking around in black. Everybody had black dresses on. The men had to wear white shirts and black ties and black slacks. The whole thing was, and this is where the heresy comes in, the whole concept is, you see, you can make the Bible say whatever you want to say. That is why you have got to have a context.

If I wanted to say it was okay to do drugs, I would take over there in Matthew where it says that Jesus was high on a mountain. See how it works? If I wanted to say it was all right to lie, I would say, "The Lord is my shepherd, He is making me to lie," and stop right there. Then if I wanted to say it was okay to drink, I would say, "He makes me to lie down by the still." Say, "Leave the water off." You can make it say whatever you want to say. If you like motorcycles, "David's triumph was heard throughout the land." I do not know what else to tell you. You can go wherever you want to go. But you cannot go wherever you want to go if you have got a context.

Now I was listening to that old boy preaching. I have heard him preach them all my life. He is coming down there, and he is preaching. But let me tell you something. God has, this is, if you do not hear anything else out of my sermon today, get this. This is the best thing I am going to say. God has a monkey wrench that will fit any nut in this world. I do not care where you go. When you try to subvert the Word of God, and when you try to get out of that thing, you are going to hang yourself out to dry. The only thing dumber than the guy preaching what I just said is the people listening to him. Because if you look at the context, look at this thing, look how God fixes the man. You cannot beat the book.

He is up there preaching, "You ladies," he is a wind sucker. He is one of those guys that goes, "And you ladies shouldn't," and he is, I do not know why they do that. Maybe he has got small lungs, I do not know. But anyway, he is coming down there, and he says, he says, "You women should not be the, let not the adorning of your, of your plaiting of your hair." He says, "You ladies like spending hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of hours on fixing your hair. You go in there and you spend \$200 getting your hair done up and all fixed up, come back out, go to sleep, and it is a mess again. What are you going to?" He is just going on and on and on. Then he gets on the gold. He says, "Well, I just walked down the street and look at the gold. They have gold on their feet." I never have understood why you women wear rings on your toes, but that is okay. He says, "They have gold everywhere. They have gold hanging around their neck. They have gold in their ears. I have seen them have gold in their nose. I have seen them have gold this and gold that." He is going on and on. Then he preaches and preaches and preaches.

Do you know what? He says, "You should not fix your hair. You should not wear gold." But if you read the verse 3, it says, "Whose adorning, let it be not the outward adorning of the plaiting of your hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel." You cannot wear any clothes either. See the problem you get into when you try to change that book and make it say something it does not say. If you are going to preach, "You cannot fix your hair," you are going to preach, "You cannot wear any gold," then you have got to preach, "You cannot wear any clothes." Because that is not what he is saying. What he is saying, and the point that he is making here, is you never prepare the outside of the body more than you prepare the inner man. Living inside you this morning is the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, "Let it be verse 4, the hidden man of the heart."

You never, you never, and I am telling you right now, I know we live in the Laodicean church period. I know it is true. I know it happens, but I am telling you, it ought not to happen. You should never look better on the outside than you look on the inside. I do not know who did and who did not. I do not care, I am just preaching this morning. Do not take this personal, but let me tell you something. I know how it is at our house. I know how it is in probably most homes. I know how it is with me. I know how it is across this country. You get up, and you rush around. First of all, you stayed out too late Saturday night. You did not do anything bad. You just stayed out too late. So you are groggy, cannot get up. Your mind is not thinking well. So you get up in the morning, and you are moving slow, and you are doing all this stuff, and you have got all the kids to get ready. You have got yourself to get ready, and you do this and you do that, and you get ready for church, and you are coming to church, and I am glad for that. Praise the Lord, I am glad you are here this morning. Do not misunderstand me. But the bottom line is most of God's people this morning never took ten seconds to prepare themselves for the preaching of the Word of God. When they get here, it is just a matter of, "Here I am, give me the Word of God." Then they wonder why they go out and say, "Well, I just did not get anything from him today." I am telling you, you have to prepare the inward man, and never, I mean, I think, yeah, I am not against fixing your hair. I am not against wearing gold. I am with old Bob Jones Sr. He said, "If the barn door needs paint, then paint it, man." Hey, I am with you. I am not against any of those things. I think it is rings on your toes and bells on your toes or however the thing goes. I do not care, I think it is great. I have no problem. I am not a prude. I think you have got to look nice. I

think you have got to fix your hair. I think you wear gold necklaces. That is fine. I think you do. I mean, I do not care. That is not the issue. The issue is do not fix the outside better than the inside.

Now I am going to say something to you. I know we are in a learning process here, and it is part of the learning. My Bible says in Psalms 40:1-3:

Psalms 40:1-3

I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.

That is the day you got saved. He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God, and many shall see it and fear and trust in the Lord, it says. Do you know what? I know it is a learning process, but I am just going to tell you anyhow, because you have got to learn. Singing is just as important as preaching. This church, just in a song service, ought to lift the roof off this place. Do you know what singing is? Singing is how you prepare the inside, that you get your heart ready. When Danny is up there and he is singing, "There is power, power, power in the blood," brother, that ought to move your heart. When he starts singing, "All hail the power in Jesus' name, when angels prostrate fall," it ought to just motivate your heart. When he sings, "There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged in these that flood lose all their guilty stain." Hey, that is the day you got taken out of the miry clay, and God set your feet upon a rock and established your goings. It was a new time in your life.

We come in here, and I will tell you what, I do not know what some of you do, and I sit back there to back. Now, John, do not take this wrong. We have known each other a long time, have we not? I love you, you love me. Will you die for me, John? I will die for you. You are the worst singer in the world. No, no, I am going to tell you. I stand back there and hear him sing. Makes my eyes water sometimes, John, I have got to tell you. But brother, you belt it out. He is back there, and I thought a car lost his tire, and the rear rim was dragging on the road out there. You can preach, John, but you cannot sing. I cannot sing either. I am terrible, but I like it. Do you know why? It does not matter if you can sing or not. It is a matter of what you have got in your heart. You do not sit around in a song service and trade recipes for your cookies. You do not sit around and figure out what you are doing or who is where, who is what. You come in, you sit down, you pick up a hymnal, and when we leave, she needs to come to me, to the lady that owns this place, and says, "What did you do to our ceiling?" It is five inches higher than it was. It ought to be lifted up because of the praise of what you have got in your heart, because what you have got on the inside is what you really have got. I know we live in a Laodicean age, and I know a lot of you are young Christians, and you have not got that far yet. Well, I am telling you, man, when you come in here, the singing is out of your heart. It is the praise of your heart for what God has done in your life. Go read Psalms 40:1-3. It is where you are at. When there is nothing there, you have got nothing to sing about. When it has got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in

your heart, man, and you have got something to sing about, even when you cannot sing. John and I are the only two guys in the world who can sit back there and sing together, and we know what you do, and everybody else thinks it is a trio. It is okay. He said, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord." Oh, let it ring.

I have never understood that. I have been down to Chief's Stadium down there, Chief's Cathedral down there, and I have watched those guys, and I mean, they used to be the same way with the Royals, but they are not much to sing about anymore, but bless their hearts. I feel terrible for them. We need to have good sports, and I do not know how much of a baseball guy, but I wish we would do better. I do not know anything about it. I know somebody gave me four tickets to the Royals game, and I left them in the seat of the car one night, and I told Barb, I said, "You know what?" I said, "God, right in our neighborhood." I said, "I left those four tickets to the Royals right on the seat of the car." I said, "I got over," she said, "It is two o'clock in the morning." I said, "Well, Connie, you know, they were in plain view." She said, "Well, go get them." I went down there, and sure enough, somebody broke the window in my car and threw in five more tickets. See, that is one of them stories that is not true. Hey, at least I tell you. Amen. Are you saved this morning? Amen? No, no, no. Are you saved this morning? Amen? Then you want to sing about it when you sing the glory of God that saved you.

Then he gives you a great verse down here in 1 Peter 3:15. He says:

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Always be ready, unsaved man. Let me tell you something. They see the difference in your life. Romans 14:7 says, "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." Somebody is always watching your life. They are watching you. They are watching you.

VIII. The Concept of Baptism

Then we get in Chapter 3, verse 21, a great principle on the concept of baptism. He says in verse 21 of Chapter 3:

1 Peter 3:21

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Who has gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and power being made subject unto Him. Now here is one of those verses that they like to take and say, "See there, see there, the Bible says baptism also doth now save us." So they like to take that, but you see, you cannot just take that. That is like Jesus was high on a mountain for drugs. Look at the parentheses underneath of it, "not putting away the filth of the flesh." You see, their salvation. In other words, every time you read the word "saved" in the Bible, it does not mean saved to

salvation. What he is saying here is that baptism saves you from having a bad conscience toward God because God wants every New Testament believer to be baptized, that is all. This is one of the greatest definitive verses anywhere in the Bible on baptism.

Next Saturday afternoon, we are going to have a baptismal service. As simply as this, if you have been saved biblically and you have not been baptized scripturally, you say, "What do you mean by that?" I mean by a New Testament, Bible-believing church. Not talking about some charismatic cult group church out here, I am talking about a Bible-believing, New Testament, Bible-believing church that teaches the Bible that is the authority by which you get baptized. You say, "Well, I was baptized." What is the authority that you were baptized under? "Well, I do not know." Well, you know what, you should have found out before you got baptized. That has everything to do with it.

Somebody says, "Well, why do you have to be baptized anyhow?" Well, somebody said, "Well, it is the first obedience to God after you are saved." Well, I never found that in the Bible, but maybe you are right. But I do not have to go any farther than this. You know what, I know that baptism represents, it represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. When He died, the Bible says that He died, He was buried, and He rose again the third day. When you get baptized publicly, you are outwardly expressing what has taken place on the inside. So when we put you under the water, we put you and bring you up. I had a man ask me one time, "Well," he said, "I am a Lutheran, we sprinkle. Why do not I am another guy said, I am a Methodist, we sprinkle. Why do not you sprinkle as a Baptist?" I said, "Because have you ever been to a funeral?" "Uh-huh." "Well, in a funeral, you know what they do? They put a guy underneath when they bury him, right? So we put him under the water, buried in a death, raised in the light. Have you ever been to a funeral? You do not take dirt, stand the guy up, and throw it in his face. A burial is underneath the ground. So we put him underneath the water."

Now somebody says, "Well, why do I have to be baptized?" Well, I do not know what else to tell you other than this. You start in Romans and go all the way to the end of the New Testament church, go all the way through history. Every born-again, saved New Testament person about the age of accountability, when they got saved, they got baptized. Everybody, everybody. Why? Because it is "an answer to a good conscience toward God." You want to have a good conscience toward God, do you not? Then get baptized when you get saved. Somebody says, "I do not understand it." Well, you do not have to understand it. You just have got to do it because it is "a good conscience toward God." That is how you start. It does not save you. It just comes down to that place where you have publicly testified outwardly what God has done for you inwardly. That is why he says, "It is a like figure." When Christ went up and died, He went under the ground, and He came out. We baptize you, it is under the water, and you come up. Not to save you, "not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but of an answer of a good conscience toward God." That is why, that is why. Remember the verse before, it says you ought to be able to answer every man that asks for a reason, to hope within you, all right? You have an answer for a man, you have an answer to God. The answer to God is a good conscience toward God that after you got saved, you followed the New Testament guidelines and the principles, you got baptized through immersion the way the New Testament church did it. Just simple as that.

IX. Standing Against the World System

Then we come to Chapter 4. Chapter 4 is a great chapter. Chapter 4 deals with the stand that you and I have to take or should take. Here again, it is to Israel, but it is also to me against the world system. I know that all of us to some degree, when you got saved, you came out of the world. Some of us came out of the world worse than others. Some of us were in worse things than others. It is a thing where we all have to struggle with things when you get saved. Those of us that have been saved longer, we may not struggle with as much or the same thing, but I feel tough for young men and women and moms and dads to get saved today in the world that we live in. The world is after their kids, the world is after their... Let me tell you something. We have people that ought to be here today that are not here. That is simply the reason is, is because they are fighting a battle with the devil, and the devil does not want them to be in the house of God. Because even though they are saved and they are never going to hell, he wants to drag them right back into the old system where they will never be any kind of right influence for God. Happens all the time, happens all the time. I am telling you, that is why we put the emphasis on helping you learn the principles of the Word of God.

Because he says in 1 Peter 4:1-5:

1 Peter 4:1-5

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Now you know what? That is exactly what you are up against today if you get saved. That is exactly what you and I have to stand up against, and I have to help you fight against. He says down through there, first of all, verse 1, he says you are supposed to arm yourself with the same mind as Christ. That is the Word of God. That is why I do the Bible the way I do it. That is why I meet with you on Thursday night. That is why I work with you one-on-one. That is why I teach you and break it down and spend the time on Sunday morning. I want you to arm yourself with the same mind. You have to start looking at the things, the people, the circumstances in your life that you have got to get rid of, and you have got to start seeing it from God's standpoint. Then you have got to realize this, verse 1, He suffered for you, your job is to suffer for Him. But you understand how you suffer and why you suffer. You do not suffer for the foolish things that you do in life. You should suffer for the righteous things you do in life.

He says in verse 4, "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess." Here it comes, guys, here it comes, ladies, the old world and the old friends, they want you back. They want you back. Let me tell you something right now, and you better get this straight in your mind. You may be saved, mom and dad, but your kids probably are not. The devil will play the odds. He will know he will never get you, but if he can get you not to come to church or not get you, dad, or you, mom, to put your life where it needs to be, he may not get you or your wife, but he is going to get your little boy in hell. He is going to get your little daughter in hell. He is going to get the rest of your family. Why? Because he does not want you to follow Christ, and he wants to do everything. You will get the old friends that laugh at you, they will call you up. They do not understand. They will speak evil of you that now that you are saved, they will want to drag you back. They will want to know why you do not run with them anymore, why you do not come to the riot, why they do all the things that you did, and they will want you to come back, and they do not understand why you got saved. Because verse 5 says:

1 Peter 4:5

Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

The quick are the people that got saved, the dead are the people who are lost and wind up at the Great White Throne Judgment. Let me say something to you. Do not let them draw you back. There is a judgment coming. I told you Thursday night, probably 28.5 evil men understand not judgment. They do not understand the judgment of God. They do not understand an eternal place called hell. They do not understand how a lost man or a lost woman dies and spends eternity without God. They do not see it, they do not understand it. They do not grasp it, and therefore they do not understand the newness of your life, how you got saved. So you need to understand that the world wants to draw you back, and you have to take a stand.

He says in verse 12 that you and I should take it for Him. Why? Because He took it for us. Oh, what a great chapter this is. If you are struggling, if you are struggling with the world, if you are struggling with staying where God wants you to be, this needs to be your chapter. This needs to be the place you hang out.

1 Peter 4:12-16

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Do you know what he is saying? God's people are the strangest people on earth. I have never, and I know the times that we live, I know it is all backwards. I know everything is screwed up, but let me tell you something. God's people today are the strangest people on the earth. You were saved. I was saved to suffer for Him. When He was on this earth, He paid the price. He was a reproach to men. They hated Him. They made fun of Him. They laughed at Him, and they wound up killing Him. Maybe they will never kill you. Maybe they will never strip you naked and nail you to a cross. Maybe they will never whip your back with a cat of nine tails. Maybe they will never whip you until your rib cage shows up. Maybe they will never do those things to you. But you know what? If you take a stand for Him, when you understand that this thing is on God's timetable, and there is a judgment coming, and God is going to judge the quick and the dead, and you realize that God has a job for you and for me, then you understand that you and I have been saved to suffer.

Verse 15 says, "We do not suffer for the, we have got to suffer for the right reason." "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief." We do not suffer for the dumb things we do. I mean, we do, but God does not get any glory out of that. We need to suffer for righteousness' sake. That is why he says in 2 Corinthians 1, I have told you this before, a pastor becomes one with his people by being one with his people through suffering, not living up here and you down here, being one with them. Hebrews 12 and 13 says, "Jesus suffered without the gate," and you and I are to suffer for Him, bearing His reproach out in this world. That is the job, that is the job of every child of God. Every child of God in these last days is to understand the times that we are in. Because you know what? It may get a lot tougher before it gets better. It may get a lot harder before it gets easier. There may be some things that come down this whole world. You see, we live in such an easy world of Christianity. We do not understand what it is like to be persecuted for what we believe. We do not understand what it is like to have things denied to us. And yet back in history, every aspect of the Christian church, every saved man and woman down through history, they paid a price for what they believe.

You see, churches would be empty today. Today they are packed out, people go everywhere. But you know what? If it was under a death threat that if you went to a church, that you were subject to arrest and losing your job, and maybe in some cases, capital punishment, you would find out on Sunday who really were the real Christians and who were not. And yet you say, "Well, I cannot even conceive of that." No, I know you cannot. But brother, in this old book right here, it tells you that they paid a price for it. There is a book right here that tells you about the men and women that were killed, had their kids taken away from them. This book right here tells you how that they were buried in bags of snakes and drowned in the river, how they had their eyes put out with hot iron because they read the wrong Bible. This book right here tells you a price that was paid by somebody that really suffered. The tragedy is, you and I are going to have to spend eternity with those same people who have paid nothing. Our greatest temptation is to go back with the world and our old friends. When these people stood there, burned at the stake, these people stood there and had to deny Christ to lose their kids, and they would not do it. Many a mother walked her little babies thrown into a pen of wild pigs because those moms would not deny Jesus Christ. It is inconceivable to think of that, but it happened. I know you like to stick your head in the sand. I know we live in such a society and say, "Oh, I just cannot bear to think

of things like that." Well, you better think about it, because it happened. We all need a reality check. Denial is more than a river in Egypt, friend. That is where most of God's people live their lives, in denial.

X. Our Job: Feeding the Flock and Humility

Then in Chapter 5 and closing, three great concepts here, and we are done. Boy, this lays out what our job is, this lays out why we are doing what we are doing.

1 Peter 5:1-4

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Do you know what our job is right now? Our job is to feed the flock. My job as pastor is to feed you, bring you up to a point, you take somebody, you feed them. The Bible says in the Bible, there are five crowns that a man gets or a woman gets at the Judgment Seat of Christ. One of those crowns is the crown of, he is talking about right here, a crown of feeding the flock, a crown of teaching somebody the Word of God, called a crown of glory. It is the crown that you get because you teach people the Word of God. That is the job, it is not just my job. My job is to teach you to get you ready to teach somebody else. You folks right now that are being disciplined, you young Christians that are being disciplined right now, you need to learn and grow because someday I am going to give you somebody to disciple. Someday you are going to work with somebody. Somebody is going to, you are going to get somebody to work with that is going to help you. That is the way it is. Because everybody, that is one of the easiest crowns anybody can get, of just understanding that your job and my job, through the suffering, is to take men and women and teach them the Word of God. The Bible talks about elders. The elders are the leaders of the church that help oversee the church with a pastor. Men and women who take hands of leadership and help oversee all the work that needs to be done.

Then the second great principle found in verse 6, and all this is great. It says in verse 6:

1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Be sober, be diligent, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. He says, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may

exalt you in due time." You see the way up is the way down. It is all backwards in the Bible. You want to get exalted, then go down. The way up, the first shall be last, the last shall be first, the Bible says. If you want to keep it, you have got to give it away. It is all backwards in the Bible, see? In the Bible, the way up is down. You serve Him here, He exalts you there. You exalt yourself here, no exaltation over there. You have got to humble yourself. Humbling yourself in the Bible is simply doing what God wants you to do, realizing that you are a servant. I am a servant. There is no glory in this. There is suffering in this. We become one with the fellowship of His suffering. Through that, in due time, you get exalted. Your millennial inheritance.

Then the last thing in verse 10, he says:

1 Peter 5:10-11

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

What a great verse, what a great concept. When you teach people the Word of God, when we take the Bible like we do and teach you the Word of God, when you just get saved and we work with you and we teach you and we sit down with you and we come over to your house and you come over to my house or wherever, Thursday night, Sunday morning, we do four things when we teach you the Word of God.

7. First of all, we perfect you. We do not make you perfect in sinless imperfections, but we perfect you for the work of God. You better clearly, in a more perfect way, understand what God has done for you.
8. The second thing we do is establish you. People come in sometimes, and they are all busted up emotionally. Sometimes they have had bad relationships. Sometimes they have had a bad life. Sometimes they just had all the ups and downs of the world. Do you know what the Word of God does? The Word of God puts them on an even course, and it establishes them. You cannot do anything with anybody until you first get them established.
9. Once you get them established, the next thing it does, it strengthens them. It strengthens them. Then they learn how to use the Word of God.
10. When you teach them how to use the Word of God, you know what it does? It settles you. You understand what your job is. You understand better why God saved you in Kansas City, why He put you in this church, why He allowed you and I to build a relationship and the Word of God together.

When you start teaching people the Word of God, you perfect them, you establish them, you strengthen them, and you settle them. Then they teach others the Word of God. That is the plan. That is the way that it works. Every head bowed and every eye closed.