

I. Introduction and Review of True Baptism

You are all doing so good in your Bibles, and I am so happy. Boy, everyone I talk to has impressed me. Some of you, who have just really never had any real connection with the Bible—I mean, you just got saved in the last year or so, or just really plugged in—I just cannot tell you how well you are doing. I come over and look at what you have, and I am impressed.

So, what I want to do is help you. In the next month, maybe a month and a half, I want to give you some key things that will help you with what you are already doing. I thought about doing this later, and I thought, "What is the point? Give it to them now while they are doing it." So, for the next couple of months or so, however long it takes, I want to focus on helping you put some things together as far as doing what you are already doing, giving you some key things that will help you. These things that we go through will be something that you will want to put into your Bible that will just help you always remember. Certainly, you will want to put them into your notebook. I am going to bring you through some key things that you will want to know and have in your mind when you start coming through your Bible, and it will really help you.

So, we are going to talk about that and start next week, but we are going to finish up our last baptism today. Last week, we talked about the one true baptism. I showed you how this was the baptism that everything else we studied kind of went toward. This was the baptism found in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12. Then we talked about Colossians 2, if you remember, this is the "by one Spirit are ye all baptized into one body." This is the true baptism in the Bible.

You remember I said last week that the true baptism in the Bible, that the Bible makes a reference to that is really the true baptism, has nothing to do with water. All the other concepts that you find are things that picture that. But the true baptism that the Bible talks about is the day you got saved, when you got immersed with the Holy Spirit of God. By one Spirit, God's Spirit, are you all baptized into one body? Of course, that body is the body of Christ. We took the time last week and broke that down for you. That is a very fundamental, but an absolute essential Bible doctrine that you need to know and understand, very crucial. So now, you ought to have that under your belt. Now you know what it means when we talk about being part of the body of Christ; this is really what it means to be saved.

As I told you earlier, when you understand all of this and put it to play in your life, you begin to see why, once you really understand these doctrinal truths, you could never come to the place where you could ever think that you could lose your salvation. That is a problem that a lot of people struggle with today. They struggle with their eternal security, understanding what really transpired the day they got saved. All my life, I have dealt with people who just struggled with the fact that once they got saved, they just could not believe that they could do something wrong and still go to heaven. It is all because they do not understand the immensity of the saving grace of God. They do not understand the philosophical concept of God's salvation. They do not understand what really happened to them the day they got saved.

That is the church's fault; that is the pastor's fault. Our job is to help you understand all of those things. There should be nobody in this church who is confused about anything in the Bible. Not in this church, because you have the opportunity anytime you want to get it clarified, because we do not want you confused. God is not the author of confusion. That is why the Bible is such a clear-cut book and takes such a clear-cut approach.

I saved this baptism for last because this baptism, in general, teaches one of the greatest truths about God that you are ever going to learn. This truth that we are going to talk about today, I know that all of you are in different stages of spiritual growth, and all of you, at some point, will get to that point in your life where God really wants to use you. There are some things about God and the Word of God that you just have to get down. What I am going to give you today, and what we are going to talk about today, is a goldmine. It is one of those things that if you are ever going to do anything meaningful for God whatsoever, you are going to have to understand this concept today. So, I am going to go slow with it. You might be thinking, "Does this last baptism have something to do with the rest of them?" This is why I saved it for last. This baptism shows you one of the greatest truths about the Bible that everybody has to know if you are ever going to do anything for God.

I do not know where you are at in your own relationship with the Lord. I do not know what your plans are for God to take your life and use you. Some of you will wind up, obviously, preaching the Word of God. Some of you will wind up just working and doing things for God. Some of you will be a tremendous work with people. But wherever you are at, wherever you find yourself, wherever you land four or five years from now, ready to hit the ground running, you are going to need to know this. This is absolutely crucial. This is not something that is an option if you are ever going to put it together.

II. The Importance of Observation and Life's Two Great Conclusions

Now, I like to observe things. I follow the principle of James 1. I think James 1:19 is one of the greatest principles of life for me, anyhow. I cannot claim it for you, but you know what it says?

James 1:19

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

That is a great principle for life. I try to, I do not always do it, but I try to apply that into my life. He says, "swift to hear." I have learned more about life, the issues of life, problems of life, problems that people have, why they get into them, how they get out of them. I have learned more by keeping my mouth shut and just listening. The Bible says that I should be swift to hear. I like to observe things. I just like to watch people. You know what a good time is to me? Going out to KCI airport sometime when it is really busy and just sitting down and watching all the people. I go to a crowd with a bunch of people, and I will tell you what, I get into just looking at and watching people and observing people. You can learn a lot. I heard somebody say one time that "time proves all things." I know that to be true. I really do. I know that is true because I have

seen it over the years. Time and the passing of time, we always talk about hindsight being 20/20. I will tell you why that is: because time and the passing of time has a way of bringing out the truth in things that maybe is not apparent when it all unfolds. If you are observant, I like to observe people. I like to observe circumstances. I like to observe situations because that is the Bible. The Bible is people who find themselves in situations and have to deal with circumstances. I find in life that you learn more by watching than you ever do by talking. If you can just learn to keep your mouth shut sometimes and just observe what is going on around you in life, your own life, and just look and understand, especially you people that are starting to get the Bible down, because what you are going to begin to see, and what you are going to begin to see unfold in your life, is you are going to begin to learn these Bible principles. You are going to begin to study these principles, and you are going to see them in your own life. Then you are going to see them act out in other people's lives. If you just keep your mouth quiet, keep your mouth shut, and do not always try to talk and always try to tell somebody what you know, if you just watch and just know what you know about the Bible, you will learn more from observing than you ever will by just telling somebody all the time what you know.

This year, I am going to be 56 years old. I know that is not old, and most people consider that still pretty young. But I hope that I have learned some things in my life about life. I really do. I have been in the ministry 35, 36 years. I hope I have learned some things about life and the circumstances of life in the ministry. I have observed things all of my life. I have watched the way things go. I have tried to put the Word of God into my life to the best ability that I could. I have followed the principle of James 1:19. I have always tried to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. I think that you need to get all the facts together before you just run on your emotions all the time. Sometimes, when it is personal situations, or family situations, or at work situations, or mom and wife situations, or mom and dad with kids situations, it is easy to get your emotions all tangled up in it. The biblical principles of the Word of God slow you down a little bit. They slow you down, and they teach you that it is better just to back off and listen to what is being said, so you get all the facts before you shoot your mouth off. So, you are slow to speak, but you are swift to hear. Then you are slow to wrath. Give the thing some time. You know why? Because time proves all things. When you learn to observe through history and life and everything in the situation of life, you are going to come to some conclusions.

As I said, I am not old by the stretch of being old at a place where I am decrepit, but I am coming through obviously the midpoint of my life. I do not think I will live to be a hundred, so I am probably past the midpoint of my life. But I look at my life and I say to myself, "I hope I have learned some things from it." I hope for me, life just was not like a bull in a china shop where you just go through and miss everything around you that God wants you to teach. I believe that life, once you become a Christian, once you get the Word of God, the greatest training scenario that God can put you in outside your own family is life itself. I believe the lessons of life; I believe God's school of life is never out. You take a guy and you put him in a Bible Institute someplace, or you train for the ministry, and that may run its course in three years, four years, two years, whatever you have. But you are not done learning at that point. In fact, probably you have not learned very much at that point. The real things you are going to learn are going to come by the time you are 30, 40, 50 years old. I hope that God grants all of you what He has

granted me. I am not going to claim to be the smartest guy in the world. I might claim to be the fastest one in the slow class. But I have watched some things, and I have come to two great conclusions in life. It is on the basis of these two conclusions that I want to talk to you about this last baptism here. I am telling you, if you never hear anything else I say to you, if this is only a one-shot deal for you here today, you picked an opportune time to come. I am telling you, you want to get what I am going to tell you today because it is going to save you a lot of heartache and a lot of trials and a lot of tribulations. The quicker you learn these two things that I am going to talk to you about today and then put them into perspective around this last baptism, the better off you are going to be.

Over my 56 years or so, I feel very blessed and fortunate that God allowed me to see these things. Most people never see them. Most people go through their whole lives oblivious to what I am going to tell you today. Blessed is the man or the woman who finds out the concepts that I am going to share with you today, and you can grasp and get them into your life and use them. I feel blessed and very fortunate for many things. I thank God every day for my wife. I thank God every day for my family. I thank God every day for the family that He has given me, and I have to give all of that credit to my wife. I think I am a very blessed person. I thank God that He gave me a book and allowed me to have the common sense just to believe it. There is not a day that goes by that I do not thank God for every one of you. I just think that, in the concept of time, God has put us together for a task and a job, and I do not take that lightly, and I thank God for that. I really do. I feel very fortunate to know what I know today because most people never get this.

I am in total agreement with probably the two greatest statements made in the Bible about life. There are a lot of good statements in the Bible. There are some one-liners in the Bible that are really unique. But I think that all of the Bible—and that is a statement because there are 31,176 verses in your King James Bible, 1,189 chapters—I think all of the Bible, as far as life is concerned, I am not talking about prophecy now, or the Second Coming of Christ, or the Rapture. I am talking about life on planet Earth that you and I have to go through every day of our life. I wish that it would have worked out that when God saved us, He would have just taken us home to heaven, that we would not have to put up with all of this. But He did not. He did not because there are some things that God wants us to do. When we preach and we have church on Sunday morning, and we have Thursday night Bible study, and everything that we do around the Word of God as I try to help you, honestly, I have to tell you the truth. I can honestly say that everything I try to do for you in the Word of God is trying to get you to come to these two conclusions that God has allowed me to come to, because these two conclusions will set up life for you, because life is a veil of tears, as the Bible says, and life can be tough.

I look at the two men in the Bible, one in the Old Testament, one in the New Testament, and I think that their observation of everything in their world, and God choosing these two men to make each a statement, wow, what two statements! I think that everything in the Bible concerning life on planet Earth can be found in these two statements. I just want to say publicly this morning before Almighty God, I thank Him for allowing me at 56 to understand this. I have grasped this for a while, but I know people that are 70 or 80 that never figured it out. I know

people that their whole life, they go through life and they never get what I consider to be the two greatest principles about life on planet Earth anywhere you are going to find. With those two principles comes an incredible teaching that I want to talk to you about this morning. I am sure right now you are wondering how this all fits into the last baptism. Just for a few short seconds, I am too, but we will get there, I promise you.

➤ The Two Great Conclusions

The first man in the Old Testament is my favorite guy, Solomon. Solomon is the wisest man that ever lived; there is no question about that. Solomon gets to do something that no man or woman on planet Earth has ever got to do. The Bible says about Solomon that nothing was held back from him. Solomon represents for us the pleasures of this life. He really does. If there is any man in the Bible that represents what we call the pleasures of life, it is Solomon. No man on planet Earth had the pleasures of life that Solomon had. Studying his life is a life of studying a man who held nothing back. He says, "Whatever my heart desired, I allowed myself to have. Whatever my eyes saw, I took. Whatever my flesh wanted to experience, I allowed it to experience." He did not hold anything back. He represents for us the world with all of its pleasures.

I believe that God put a man like Solomon in there. I know all the theological ramifications. Solomon not only goes through all the pleasures of life, he goes through all the ideologies of life, of every form of lifestyle there is. But Solomon majored in what they call hedonism. Hedonism is, brother, the sky is the limit for your own pleasure. It is incredible. We look at the world and we look at all the pleasures. That is what a young man does, or a young lady does. They look at life, and they grow up on planet Earth, and they see life through the pleasure eye-pieces of life, and they want to have all the pleasures. If you want to talk about a man that had money, it was him. Donald Trump and Bill Gates could not even get in the front door of Solomon's temple. They could not put Solomon in a "Forbes 500" list; they would have to get a bigger book with a bigger number because Solomon just had it all. When it came to money and possessions, he had a building that everything in it was made of gold and overlaid with gold. This guy had more money and riches; he never wanted for anything in his life. You want to study the pleasures of life through money? This is it. Hugh Hefner had nothing on Solomon. Hugh Hefner, with his Playboy Mansion and all his little bunnies running around the place, he was a rank amateur according to Solomon. He had a thousand women, a thousand! I mean to tell you, a thousand of the most beautiful, voluptuous women, picked from around the world. He went in there, boy, and when he went in there, they lined up every beautiful woman in the world and in the country, and he walked down and said, "Yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, yes, no." And they went home with him. He had every monetary thing he wanted. He had every sexual pleasurable desire that anybody could ever want to have. He had it. Nothing was held back from him. He had everything that he wanted in the world of pleasure. God said that He held nothing back for him, that Solomon experimented in everything. He had the best musicians. He had the best food. He had the most beautiful women. He had all the money. He had a nice palace. He had all the world. You want political power? Kennedy, Bush, you name the president, the congressman, they could not lick his boots. The whole world recognized Solomon as the greatest, wisest man that ever lived. Let Bush try that. As good as he was, let Reagan try that. There is always somebody out

there that does not like what the leaders do, not Solomon. But when you go back and study his life and study the course of his life, every nation on planet Earth was coming into Jerusalem, not Washington, Jerusalem. When he flew into a country, there were 9,000 gorgeous, beautiful women with signs that said, "Take me home." He walked into his house, and everywhere you looked was gold furniture, gold walls, gold floors. He had everything. Yet, when he writes the book of Ecclesiastes, he comes to a great conclusion. When it is concerning the pleasures of this world, which we are all confronted with, and all of the things that we have to deal with in life on planet Earth, if you learn this first principle, God has been good to you. You know what he said at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes, in Ecclesiastes 12:13, when he had done everything, experienced everything, tasted, touched, and handled everything, had everything he wanted? Here is what he said:

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

That is one of the greatest statements that you will ever get anywhere in the Bible on life on planet Earth when it comes to the pleasures of sin for a season.

In the New Testament, we have the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul represents the wisdom of this world, where Solomon represents all the pleasures and all the ideologies, all the "ologies" of man. Everything that man comes up with that makes his life more pleasurable and easy, and more the way he wants it, we find in Solomon. But when it comes to the wisdom of this world, you realize that Paul was the most educated of all the men that God had called. You go through the book of Acts, and you look in the book of Philippians, look at his pedigree. He had been trained by the best. He had everything knowledge-wise in his day. There was nothing else. He had reached the epitome of the mindset of the educational world and the wisdom of this world. He had everything that you could want in an education. He had it all.

When he came down to the bottom line, when he compared it to what God gave him, he said, "I look at all that I have been taught." He goes down and he lists everything. He gives the places, the degrees, the men he studied under. He says, "I count all that as dung." That is not the greatest conclusion he came to at all. That just led him to the great conclusion. His great conclusion is found in Romans 3:4. You see, one man made the statement based on the pleasures of this life. And he said, "You want the bottom line after it is all said and done? Let me save you a lot of heartache. Just fear God, keep His commandments; that is the whole duty of man." You know what Solomon did by doing all of that? He saved me the expense of getting my life really screwed up. You know what I am trying to do for you this morning? I am trying to save you the expense of getting your life really screwed up.

You know what Paul said? When he looked at everything, Paul never got one more stitch of education after he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. I do not know what he got from God one-on-one. But you know what he said when he looked at all of his education and everything that he was taught, and he was taught and trained by the best? He came to the conclusion that all

that, compared to what he had with God and God's Word, was dung. In Romans 3:4, it led him to the second great statement that I have come to, and it simply is:

Romans 3:4

God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

If you can get those two and get them in your brain and get them working in your life, you see, life on planet Earth is not complicated. It really is not. We make it complicated because we refuse to recognize that here is a man that knew more about pleasure than we did. Here is a man who knew more about all the ideologies of man, all the pleasures of life, all the riches that we could have. Here is a man who knew more about it than we did. Look what he said. Then here is a man that looked at all the wisdom of this world, and look what he said. He said, "Let God be true and every man a liar." You follow those two things, you are going to be okay in life.

III. The Bible as God's Mind and the Danger of Tampering

You want to find the right God? It is not hard. I have people all the time I run into, and they say, "Well, I am on a search for God." Whoa, time out. You do not have to search for Him. The Bible says the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. He has already found you. You need to stop and recognize that He has already got a hold of you. You do not have to seek for God; He is seeking for you. We have all these religions out here in the world. How in the world do we know? It is so easy, it is unbelievable. If you just follow my two patterns, you know how I know that trusting God and believing in Jesus Christ and God is the right religion? Because it is the one everybody hates. It is the one that everybody wants to stop you from being part of.

You go down to Guantanamo Bay, you know what they do down there? They will not let your kids pray in school. They will not let your kids read their Bible. In your courthouse, you cannot have the Ten Commandments. You go to Congress and you go to the Senate; when they open their session, they have a man pray, but he is instructed not to use the name of Jesus Christ. You go to Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous, and you can talk about your higher identity or your higher power, your higher being, but you cannot say God and Jesus Christ. But if you go down in Guantanamo Bay, our government that says your kids cannot pray, we cannot have the Ten Commandments, they are passing out Qurans, giving prayer rugs, and painting on the walls of the prison which way is east, so when they lay out, sit down, kneel down, they go toward Mecca, they get the right direction. It is a good thing I am not a guard down there; I would be putting them wrong. I would be going south instead of east.

But you see, it does not have to be a knowing what I know. I know that what I have in God and Jesus Christ is true simply because the whole world hates it. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure that out. Why? When Jesus Christ showed up, the toughest crowd that He had to deal with, that always gave Him trouble, was the religious crowd. You know how I know I have the right Bible? I preach and believe out of a King James 1611 Authorized Version. You know why I know

I have the right Bible? Because it is the one everybody hates. I will tell you something else: it is the one every time they come up with a new translation, they have to compare it to this one.

You know how I know it is the Word of God? I will tell you how I know it is the Word of God. I am an observant person. I know I look dumb, but that is an act. I look stupid, but it is an act. Because I have learned to be slow to speak, but I listen all the time. Swift to hear. I observe things. If I did not know that that Bible, I do not have to go to the theological ramifications. I do not have to sit down with somebody and talk about manuscript evidence. I know that book is the absolute and infallible Word of God, just like I know that God in Christ is the right God, because everybody hates it.

Back in 1962, you know what happened? The Supreme Court made it against the law for your child to pray in school and to read their Bible in school. I do not know what you know, because I do not know how observant you are. But right back in 1962, the nine Supreme Court justices were all Roman Catholic, all trained in Roman Catholic Jesuit schools. Justice O'Connor, two years later in 1964, wrote an official paper for the Archbishop of Boston. In that writing to the Archbishop of Boston, he tells him, Reverend Thomas was his name, he tells him that when the nine Roman Catholic judges of the Supreme Court looked at the issue of prayer and reading the Bible in school—this is not the craziness of Bob Alexander I am giving you, this is not some loon out here—I am talking to you about somebody who has observed why you were doing your thing. Why? Because I came to the conclusion that the two men in that Bible were right in what they said. When O'Connor wrote that paper for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, he said, and I quote, "When we began to study the public school system as a whole, there were many things that were encouraging, but there were many things that were troublesome. We saw immediately as we studied this, we saw an issue that had to be dealt with because we realized that Roman Catholic students in the public school were being forced to read out of a King James 1611 Authorized Version." Because nine Catholic judges recanted that book and did not want their students with their church having to read that book, they just wiped it clean. We walk around with our head in the clouds like we are going somewhere. We are not observant. You know how I know that book is right? Because everybody hates it. Everybody wants to get rid of it.

I have observed some things that I am about to say to you, and I am going to give you something here that is a goldmine. You remember last week I talked to you about the old Texas guy that was living on an oil well down there, and he did not know he was living in poverty. One day, they came up to him and said, "Hey, son, I am a geologist, old man, we just found \$19 billion worth of oil, and you are sitting on it." I tried to tell you, that is exactly the way you and I are. We are sitting on a billion, trillion, octillion dollars in that book, and we are not drilling. We are not drilling it because they really do not believe what those two men said. We still think worldly pleasure is the way to go. We are just not convinced yet that man does not have more to say than God.

Somebody asked me a couple of weeks ago, maybe a couple of months ago, I was out with some friends, and we were doing some things, and some other Christians were there. Somebody asked me the question if I had ever read the book on "The Purpose Driven Life." I said, "Well, yes, I

certainly have, several times." She said, "You really liked the book?" I said, "I love it." She said, "Oh, I read it too." She said, "But I only read it once." I said, "You know what? I read it probably three or four times a year." She said, "Really?" It did not take much more of a conversation for it to come to light that we were not talking about the same book.

Now, I have to ask you a question, and this is the problem. I say that telling you this: I read all kinds of books. I read everything I can get my hands on. We went to a wedding last night up in St. Joe, in the First Presbyterian Church of St. Joe. I was sitting at the wedding, and I was bored because I am always bored at weddings. It does not matter how good they are. I did like the dog coming down the aisle; it was worth the trip for the dog. He did not make it all the way; he decided he was not going to go back. Then he started checking, and he started throwing up in the middle of church. Then he started barking in the back. I love this dog. But I am sitting there, you see? I am an observer. So, I am looking around this thing, and there is a thing on what the First Presbyterian Church believes. So, I am going to get me a little theology study. So, I studied it. Then I finally got a Bible in there; it is an RSV. So, I start opening it up, pick that RSV, and I start thumbing through it. In the back, there is a whole section on how the RSV came into being. There is a whole section on where all the Bible stuff. There is some stuff in there that is really good. So, I get that stuff down. I go wherever I go, I try to learn something. I do not care where it is. If I went to Catholic Mass, I would learn something. I would learn to wear knee pads or something. I would learn something. I am not against those. I go and I learn. You know why? Because I am not closed-minded. You just think I am closed-minded because you have no mind at all. I am the most open-minded person you ever watched. You get close to me, you will fall in; it is so open. I am open-minded. I am not closed-minded. If you believe that, you show me something better than that, and I am with you. I am not closed-minded about that, but I have observed some things. I have learned some things, and I learn wherever I go, and I have observed some things. I have looked at this thing, and I am telling you, I am going to give you something. It is a goldmine this morning, and it is going to answer a lot of questions for you. It is going to put this whole thing in perspective. You are going to go out of here, if you are an observant person. If you are one of those narrow-minded people that you have got your mind already made up with, then you are on your own; I cannot help you. But I have observed what I am about to say to you for 36 years out of my 55 years, over half my life. I am not an expert on it, but I have learned something. I am just passing them on; take it or leave it. I do not care.

Jesus made incredible claims about Himself, almost to the point of the height of arrogance. If He is not who He said He was, then He had an ego bigger than the Titanic. No, I believe He is who He said He was, and I believe He has enough to say it because He has enough to bring it to pass. My point is this: He made some great claims. The Bible has made some great claims about itself too. One of the things the Bible says, we saw this yesterday in our Song of Solomon study in our marriage classes, if you did not grasp it yesterday, you will never grasp it, but the Bible claims for itself to be God's mind. I do not fully understand all of this, but let me give you what I do understand about it.

God went back to heaven. He had a job for me to do. God would live life like He left a will and Testament. We call it the Old Testament and the New Testament. When you die and you leave,

you know what you leave? You leave a testament called a will. In that will, which is your testament, you tell what you want done after you are gone. Does anybody have a tough time with that? When Christ went back to heaven, He left two Testaments: an Old Testament for Israel and a New Testament for us. In those Testaments, He gave us His mind on what He wanted us to do. It is just that simple. If somebody wrote a will out, and it was all proper, you could go into court, you could contest that will all you want. But if it was proven that this is what the person said, and this is what he wanted, that was his mind on the issue. That is the question they always bring up: "Was he of right mind? Was he of sound mind when he left this will?" Let me tell you something, that is the issue. Was God of sound mind when He left us that last will and Testament, one for the nation of Israel, the Old Testament, one for you and me in the New Testament? I believe that He was. When I read in Romans, the Bible says, and the greatest Christian ever lived said, "Let God be true and every man a liar," then that is what I believe. I believe that when the Bible says it is the mind of God, I believe that is what it is. That is why the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul again said, "We have the mind of Christ." He was not talking about his brain in a glass jar full of formaldehyde. He was talking about the written Word of God. When he says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," he is talking about the Word of God. God's Bible made a claim that that book is the mind of God. When you get that book and take that book, you have got God's mind on everything in life. That is why Paul said, "Let God be true and every man a liar." That is why Solomon said, "After I have experienced everything life on Earth had, let me give you the bottom line: Fear God and keep His commandments." Do you see that? That is where I am coming from.

I said all that to say this, and this is the thing that I want you to know based on everything I said. Here is the bottom line: The Bible is God's mind. The Bible makes that claim. When you and I, as human men, mess with that book, which is God's mind, God is going to mess with your mind. I am going to show you this morning why 99.9999% of God's people are certifiably nuts. I am going to give you the answer to every stupid thing that is going on in life today in the body of Christ. I am going to show you the reason why it is so screwy is because they are certifiably insane. You think I am making that statement out of line? Just hang on with me for a while. There are three warnings in your Bible about messing with God's mind. God put one in the beginning of the Bible, in Deuteronomy 4:2. He put one in the middle of the Bible, in Proverbs 30:5. He put one at the end of the Bible, in Revelation 22:18-19. He spaced them out so if you were reading your Bible, you would snag into one of them. Three warnings in that Bible about messing with that book, which is God's mind.

If you are not familiar with Hebrews 4, do not turn there; I will just kind of walk you through it. Hebrews 4:12-13 are two great verses on the Bible. They show you in those verses that the Bible is unlike any other book the world has ever seen. I have figured it out based on the two things that I told you earlier, and based on the things I have seen by observing, I now know why not only God's people but unsaved people do not want to come to church. I have now figured out what the real issue is. I used to think it was me. I now feel better about myself because I know that is not true. I understand now what the issue is because when I come through Hebrews 4:12-13, it says that this Bible is a sharp two-edged sword. As you read down through there, it says this Bible discerns the thoughts and the intents of your heart. The Bible says in those passages,

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight." Then it says that "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." In other words, when you come to your Bible, before you turn the first page, that Bible has read your attitude of heart about God and the Word of God, and knows your preconceived ideas, and knows the game you are playing when you come.

This is why people do not read their Bible. This is why they do not like the Bible. This is why in churches today, they make it real easy by putting it on some obscure screen so you do not have to carry it, so you do not feel any more threatened than you already do. Here is the reason why men and women do not like the Bible, God's people: The moment you start reading that Bible, it starts reading you. We do not like that. We do not like the idea that there is an absolute living book that when we open its pages and begin to read it, everything in our lives that we are trying to hold secret gets open and naked before God. We do not like that. Unless you come to the conclusion that I told you about earlier, where you have seen life, the pleasures of life, and now you realize that it is an absolute joke to get through life without God, and unless you have come to the place that you have taken the position that everything that man has for you, everything that he wants to give you, "Let God be true and every man a liar," you are going to have a problem with the scriptures. That is why men want to take that book, this one right here, and elevate it to a translation. This is why they want to get out of your mind that this book is no different, that they want to make the real absolute living Word of God some obscure manuscript someplace that nobody has ever read, nobody has ever seen, and those are the real Word of God, but this is just like any other book. Brother, you mess with that book, and God messes with your mind. The problem in God's people's lives today is they are insane. Wait until I get there. I like hearing myself say it three or four more times, and then I will get into it.

IV. The Insanity of Modern Christianity

Now, I want to show you something, and for this I want you to turn to Ezekiel 14. I am going to show you this concept, and you better get it. Maybe you are not coming back, maybe you have already made up your mind, I do not care, just get it, because wherever you go, this is the thing that is going to go with you. We are going to pick it up in verse one. You want to see Christians today? You want to know why 90 percent of the churches in this city are insane this morning? You want to know why 90 percent of God's people are cuckoo for lunch today? I am going to show you why. I am going to show you what the problem is. The problem is simply this: when you mess with that book, and you come to that book with a preconceived idea about your life of pleasure and how it is going to fit into God's program, or your education of how you are smarter than God, I have some news for you. I want you to see this. Then maybe I will pray, and then you can slip out of here if you want to. Steve is already leaving; he is not waiting for me to pray. Here we go.

Ezekiel 14:1-5

1 Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

5 That I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.

You know what He says? That is God's book. That is God's mind. You try to mess with that thing, and God messes with your mind. You know what He is saying? If you want to believe the lie you are living right now, God will give you book, chapter, and verse to do it. He will take you in your own heart. When you set up in your heart the preconceived ideas of where you are at, what you want to do, where you want to go, and then you come to God for truth when you have already made up your mind and justified what you want to do, let me tell you something, He is going to deceive you by your own heart. Why? Because you messed with His mind; He is going to mess with yours.

I got out last week. I got a young man that I have known for a number of years, training for the ministry, probably one of the most natural preachers that I have ever had. I had heard he got a church over at Olathe, Kansas. You do not need to know the church, do not even need to know who it is, it is immaterial. But I had heard over the last four or five years that this guy had absolutely come to the place where he had dumped the Bible as the Word of God. I just heard that. So when I hear that, I just keep it in my head, and I am an observer. I never talked to this kid. I do not feel it is my part to go, I mean, wherever he is at. He has not called me, I do not call him. But then two weeks ago on the internet, he had posted a whole thing of why he no longer believes the King James Bible is the Word of God. I said, "I guess I have got to get this." So somebody got it for me and gave it to me. I thought, I thought I was in for a really good time. You are thinking, "Ah, Bob is just going to bash this guy." When I first heard about that, I was excited because I thought he was going to show me something I did not know. Because you know what? You think I care which one is the Word of God? I do not care. I care about three things in this life outside my family. And that is one of them black, one of them yellow, one of them brown. This book here, it could be anything. I do not care. You think I get paid every time I say the word King James Bible? I do not care. I could care less. You think I got injected someplace, and brainwashed? Hey, I do not care. It could be Muggsy McGurk, Popular Mechanics. I do not care what it is. But I would want to see if this guy has got something I miss, I want to see it. Because I am telling you something, the day I find out that is the wrong book, I will change. I do not care. I do not care at all. So I got this thing, and I am thinking, "Oh boy, this is going to be good." I was terribly disappointed. This kid fell into the trap. He listed 33 books that he had come to this conclusion on. These are some good books. I do not believe he read all 33 of them. I read all 33 of them. I read all 33 of them when he was on Saturday morning sitting on the couch watching Bugs Bunny gnawing on a fudge sickle. I went through all 33 of them. I can say this right now, if you go through all 33 of them the way you should, and they were not all

good. They were pro and con, but I am telling you this, if you go all 33 down that and you come to the conclusion you just came to, you have got something wrong up here. Then I found out what it was.

You see, I am a psychiatrist. No, I am. Jesus was a great physician, but I am a physician. You come to me, you say, "I do not feel good spiritually." I take your temperature. I listen to your heart. I look at your teeth. I will check your ears. And then as the attending physician, I will write you a prescription. See how it works. I will tell you what your doctor does when you go to him. He listens to all, checks you out, and he says, "I think you have got this." And then he gives you something. You go to the drug store. I am a physician. I was trained by the great Physician. I got my medical degree. I got a BA. I am born again. I have the ability to diagnose spiritual conditions and then give you a prescription. So all I did was diagnose what he brought me in those 33 books. The Bible was not listed.

Now here is the conclusion he came to, and I am not going to make a long story short. It did not come out the way I meant it to come out. I know all of you are praying that God was not, I was speaking ex-cathedra here. But let me make a long story short. Here is what the bottom line was. In the world today, if he would have gone with the Bible, where I started is the Bible. Remember that book I told you about, "The Purpose Driven Life"? Now let me ask you a question. Why—and I am not saying you should not read it—but I am saying this: Why would you read a book that man wrote on how to live your life when you refuse to read the book that God wrote how to live your life? You think that he has got something better to say than God does? But that is where we are at today. You realize last year that book, "The Purpose Driven Life," outsold the Bible in sales? That is a tragic thing. Let me tell you something. You know what is wrong with the body of Christ when a book by man outsells a book by God? They are nuts. You are insane. You have now actually come to the conclusion that there is a better book about a purpose-driven life than the one that God wrote. And I am not knocking a book. I am just saying, this guy in his list of things, 33 books, Bible was not one of them. Any biography of what I read, it starts with the Bible and goes downhill from there. Because I follow the position of the greatest Christian ever lived that said, "Let God be true and every man a liar."

Now, at least if you are going to fault me for this, you have got to fault Paul. He had more education than anybody in this world today. And what this kid had done, he had read all of these books that all of these guys who hate the Bible. And so instead of going to God's Word to find out the bottom line in things, which he knew better already, he forgot the Bible. And here is the bottom line. In the churches today, in Christianity today, in the scholarship of today, and every Bible college in this country, when it comes to the Bible and the inerrancy of the scriptures, here is what it is: The Bible is guilty. It has to prove itself innocent. You know what my position is? The Bible is innocent. You prove it guilty. Why? "Let God be true and every man a liar."

Now, I am a lot of things, and I am not a lot of things I am good at, but I will tell you one thing that is good about me. If I did not believe that that was the absolute, infallible Word of God, I would go get an honest job someplace. What hope do I have to give you if I do not have a book that is from God? I mean, honestly, if that book is just like any other book that man wrote, then what are we doing here? I am telling you, when I saw that thing, and then I got the real issue.

Here it came. Here is what happened. This guy came to the place where he bought into this because he wants to build a big church. He has got a church that he is building that is costing mega millions of bucks. And he has learned that you cannot bring people to church if you are going to step on their toes 24 hours a day. You get up in that church and say that there is only one Bible, and that is what we are going to stand on. Next Sunday, you could hold services in a phone booth. I think it is the most absolutely incredulous, parabolic thing in the world for any preacher to cut his sermons and not preach what God tells him to preach because he is afraid he is going to hurt his income. That is the trap we fall into. You know why? Because we are nuts. We are nuts. We are crazy. We are absolutely insane. I am telling you, I am going to give you a golden nugget that is 25 tons right now. You want to put this in the back of your truck and carry it home. Here is what my dear brother has forgotten, or he never knew, or he has got so insane that he has lost the concept. But brother, I am telling you, here is where it is. And this is what happened. This young man, God has taken him in his own heart. He has made up his mind that building a church and reaching thousands of people dictate compromising what the Bible says. Let me tell you something. It is never right to do wrong so you can get the chance to do right. It is never right to do wrong that you may get the chance to do right. You do right. That is not where we are at today.

I am still under the old impression that Jesus knew what He was talking about, but then I have not reached the insanity level with some of the brethren. I still believe that building a church, at least God, Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw men unto me." I think it has nothing to do with a big building, what part of town you are in. I am telling you, when you have got to tailor your message so you are not offensive because you want to build a church, and you have got to dump the book God gave you because it is not socially acceptable, you are nuts. You are nuts. Absolutely nuts. I am telling you, you are nuts.

V. Four Types of Laughter and God's Judgment

I told you last week that God has a sense of humor. Oh, He does. Most people cannot appreciate it. They have no clue. Have you ever seen what the first sin was in the Bible? You think the first sin of the Bible is in Genesis. No, it is not. That may be the first we are seeing in the order of the books of the Bible, but that was not the first sin. The first sin in the Bible was back in Isaiah 14. You know what the first sin of the Bible was? It was a man standing up, or a cherub standing up, and thinking he was smarter than God. You know what the second sin in the Bible is? That is the one in Genesis 3. It is a man and a woman getting input from the devil, thinking they are smarter than God. You know what the biggest problem you and I have to deal with in life? It is you and I coming to the place that we think we are smarter than God.

God has a sense of humor, and I am telling you, you mess with God's mind, and He messes with yours. In the mid-80s, I read a book by a doctor, a PhD in psychiatry medicine from Stanford University. The name of that book was called "The Emperor's New Clothes." The title was based on the old classic, where the emperor had new clothes, but he did not have any clothes, and everybody saw him naked, and everybody was telling him how nice he looked when he really was naked, and he was buying into what everybody said. This guy was a doctor of psychiatry. I

never figured out if he was a Christian or not, but it was a very good book. He had done a 25-year study, and I read this book in the mid-80s, and I remember he was a PhD in psychiatric medicine from Stanford University, and the name of the book was "The Emperor's New Clothes." Here is what he said: Based on his 25 years of study and research, he said that he has come to the conclusion, based on what they have said in the people's interviews, that 75 to 80 percent of the people in mental health institutions claim to be born-again believers. He said that in the mid-80s. Somebody said, "Do you believe that or not?" You know what? I know this: You mess with God's mind, He messes with yours. I do know this. I do not know about his book, but I can tell you this right now: I will give you an even higher percentage. 90 to 95 percent of God's people are insane, certifiably today, and they are out running around. You know what Christianity is? It is an insane asylum run by the inmates. We have lost the concepts that we actually think now. We can be a Christian and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Why? We are nuts. We actually believe that God did not mean what He said, and man and what he writes overshadows and oversees what God said. We are nuts.

Have you ever seen God's sense of humor? You realize in the Bible—and I do not know what you read or what you study, I am an observer—you realize in the Bible there are four types of laughter. You will find, as you study it through, you will find four types of laughter in the Bible.

1. The first one is the laughter of skepticism. That is some of you and some of your friends. When you are faced with the truth of God, a lot of God's people fall into this one. A lot of unsaved people do too, but a lot of God's people do. A lot of God's people laugh at the fact that God could write a book and preserve it, that you and I could have the exact will and testament of Jesus Christ. They look upon what He said, they look at some what He said, and they absolutely just laugh and think it is hilarious.
2. The second laugh is the laugh of sinful merriment. That is when you are out with the crowd. That is when you are out with your date. That is when you are out with the world. That is when you are out running around doing your own thing and you are going places you should not go and doing things you should not do. You have a drink in one hand, a cigarette in the other hand, and you are out there having the time of your life with Mr. Right or Mrs. Wrong, or whoever the case may be, and you are down there and you are just laughing and having a good time. The music is loud, the smoke is thick, the lights are dim, and you are having a great time, and you are just laughing, laughing, laughing. That is a laugh of sinful merriment.
3. Then you have the laugh of victory. The laugh of victory is the child of God. That is when the devil thinks he is going to get you, and you think he is going to get you, and if the last buddy does not get you, then you give out a shout and you are happy. You know when that laugh is going to come true? Right after the Rapture of the church takes place. We are going to be splitting our sides for about 20,000 years up in eternity because we are going to finally realize it is over. No more fears. For the first time in your life, you is going to be in a place where everything you think, everything you say, and everything you do is just going to please God. The devil is not going to bother you anymore. He cannot get you now. You got rid of that old flesh. Everything is behind you. You have everything looking forward to, and brother, let me tell you something, that is the laugh of victory.

4. Then the last laughter in the Bible is the laughter of God. Most people do not have a clue to this. If I have not lost you yet, I am going to lose you now, probably, because the laughter of God is the laughter of condemnation. We all like a good joke. Does not Reader's Digest say that laughter is the best medicine? Sure it does. All kinds of fun. I like a good joke, a good clean joke. They say laughing is good for you. I believe that. I like a good joke. But do we not say that he who laughs last, laughs best? God has the last laugh. You think that God is some stoic being in the heavens that does not have a sense of humor? The Bible says God, I will show you what He laughed at. You do not have to turn to it; I will read it to you.

Proverbs 1:24-26

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

Do you see that? There is somebody who God tried to get straightened out in life, tried to get him on "Fear God and keep His commandments," and tried to get to the place where "Let God be true and every man a liar." But the guy refused. The lady refused. They just would not hear the reproof. They would not hear the counsel. Now they are in a bind. "Oh, now we are going to have a come-to-Jesus meeting. Oh, now we are going to run. We are going to try to get everything. Oh, now we are in, well, we have a problem. Oh, preacher, help me. Oh, we have this. Oh, we have that." You know why some of God's people find themselves after years and years and years in those kinds of situations and cannot get out? You know why they cannot get out? And it just keeps getting worse and worse and worse? I know you do not understand this because you are insane, but I will tell you what the problem is. The problem is, you have come to the place where God, in His relationship with you, you shut Him out so long, you want nothing to do with Him, and you have deceived yourself. Now you are certifiably insane, and God just laughs at your calamity. Look at it. Do not get mad at me. I suggest if you do not like what I am saying, here is what you do: get out to your car. There are a bunch of big empty parking places over there. Write these two verses down and get your big old knife and cut them out. Make you feel better. Look what He says: "But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." We just have a tough time in the 20th-century church today, seeing some poor little helpless person down here saying, "Oh, God, help me. Oh, God, help me. I am in a jam." And God says, "Are you in a jam? You look like you are in a jam to me." We cannot get God doing that, can we? You know why? Because we are nuts. You know why? Because we all believe that God is deceived and God is mocked, and whatever we sow, we never reap. That is where we are at. We really do not believe that God will give us a lie. We really do not believe God will not take us in our hearts when we come to Him wanting to keep our lifestyles and yet give ourselves to God. We just do not think God means business. We just do not think that God means business because we do not mean business. We think God looks at us like we look at Him. Wrong again, wrong again, wrong again.

You know what the wisest man that ever lived said? He said:

Ecclesiastes 11:9

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

He says, "Hey, young man, do whatever you want to do. Do not listen to me. Go out and live in the world. Go do what you want to do. Get all your mom and dad. Make fun of everything at church. Do not like to come to hear the Word of God. Do not submit yourself to any kind of authority. Just live your lifestyle and do what you want to do. It is okay, but know this, that for all these things, God will bring you into judgment." Do you see the downside of that? The downside is we are nuts. You are absolutely nuts if you think as a child of God, you are going to get away with it. Absolutely nuts. Be not deceived; God is not mocked.

You know what cracks God up? I am not kidding you. I will bet you in heaven, we all get this picture of heaven, and they are singing "Holy, Holy, Holy," and I think they probably did that for a long time, but now I do not think all they do up there is laugh a lot. I do not know if they know what is going on down here or not, but if they do, heaven is in a total siege of crack-up. They are absolutely laughing themselves to death. You know what cracks God up? It is a man or a woman who thinks they are smarter than God. Here is God sitting up there with all the infinite wisdom, omnipresent, omniscient, all of those good things, and here we are down here. We have a little PhD or an MA. We have our little education down here like Paul had, and instead of coming to the dung, we come up there and we think, "Wow, I am smarter than God." When a man makes that statement and he wants to correct the Word of God and tell some little guy out there, "That book is not reliable," they just fall off the benches of heaven laughing up there. I believe that.

You know what else cracks God up? Here is an unsaved man or an unsaved woman thinking they are more righteous than God is. I will tell you something else. If they have cracked heaven up and made it to another time, there is somebody getting up and saying there is no God. Back in the Age of Reason and the Age of Enlightenment, there was a guy by the name of Nietzsche, who was one of the great minds out of the European think tanks over there that destroyed, was part of the responsibility of destroying everything in America. Nietzsche was a great thinker, schooled in the great educational facilities of Europe, studied theology, studied geology, studied all the sciences, and he had come to the conclusion because this little pipsqueak of a brain had come to the place where he had gotten some education now. Nietzsche came to the masterful conclusion, and he made his presentation before a crowd of six or seven thousand eggheads just like you. Nietzsche got up while the whole room waited with bated breath for the great words of Nietzsche, and Nietzsche came to the forum, and his great statement was, after all his education, after everything that he had learned, after everything that he had induced himself in—and by the way, Nietzsche could not pick Solomon's apples for him off the tree—Nietzsche came up with a great statement that "God is dead." All the place applauded. You know why? Because they want God dead. Man does not want any accountability. He does not like a book! When you begin to read it, it reads you. I am telling you, when Nietzsche stood up there and said, "God is dead," the whole place just came apart. Heaven, there were angels throwing their harps up in the air. I will tell you what, they were just, I mean, the Old Testament saints were staggering around, falling

down. You could hear the laughter for 25 million light years. The fact that here He was, sitting on the throne, running everything, holding the atoms together, the negative and the positive, holding all the Earth together, made all the galaxies and all the angelic hosts and all the cherubim and all the seraphim. And there on the throne was the glory of God! And little pipsqueak man had come to the conclusion that somewhere in the process of time, poor old God died. Four or five years later, Nietzsche died. God has a sense of humor. Somebody went by about two months after Nietzsche was dead, and they had a little tombstone down there, and they were walking by one day and looked over there, and some shout-at-God, some old Bible believer, had walked over there and wrote on this tombstone, "Nietzsche's dead. Signed, God." I like that. God has a sense of humor. You bet He does.

VI. The Baptism of Fire

I said all that to say this. You know this last baptism. I am telling you, when you come to God with a preconceived idea over that book, which is His mind, He is going to mess with you. I am telling you, the body of Christ is absolutely nuts. God said, "I will take the nation of Israel in her own hearts." What God has done today, He has taken God's people and the body of Christ who reject the Word of God, and think they are smarter than God. He has taken them in their own attitude of their heart, just like Ezekiel 14. It is hard to believe. Let me tell you something. You cannot—please allow me to say what I am saying; it is a free country; I have the right under the amendments to just let everybody else do—it will be hard to go to a Southern Baptist Church today, anywhere in this country, to find anybody, any church that believes you have a Bible. In fact, I can say that because we came out of a Southern Baptist Church years and years ago. You know why J. Frank Norris broke away? I know you do not know this because you are not an observer. But you know why we are here today? We are here today because an old powerhouse like J. Frank Norris saw in Baylor University and all the schools at Southern Baptist Convention back there in the 20s and the 30s, they were teaching evolution. They were teaching the creation stories were false. They were teaching there was no God, that Jesus Christ was not God. He said, "I am not putting up with this." He said, "Let God be true and every man a liar," and off he went. But you know what happened in 1914? You know what they put out in 1914? The Southern Baptists came out. You could not find a church today to believe it at all. You know what they put out in 1914 in their Sunday School publication? They put out in 1914, out in Nashville, Tennessee, the publication that said that every believer had to have the Word of God. The Word of God would teach them that he did not need Greek, that he did not need Hebrew. They did not need some college professor; they just needed the Holy Spirit of God, and God had given you an absolute Word of God, inspired by God. He just came right down the line with where you are at today with the Word of God. In 1912, what happened? What happened from there to there? It looks confusing. You know what happened from there to there? Insanity. You mess with God's mind, He messes with yours. That is all.

You know why some of you justify your lifestyle and say, "I am a Christian," but you are not a Christian? Or some of you just do everything that a Christian does not do, and yet you walk around saying, "Well, I am a Christian, I am a Christian." You are not a Christian because you say you are. You are a Christian because you have had a life-changing event in your life, that old

things were passed away, all things become new. That is what the Bible, that black book with gold pages on the edges, that is what it says. But you see, we are insane. We think we can get saved and then continue to live our godless, filthy lifestyles, talk the way we want to talk, do the things we want to do, and then talk about still being a Christian. You are nuts! Where in the world did you get that? I do not know where you got that. I do not know how you grasped that. Where did that come from? You realize the church in this city right now that is probably one of the biggest churches in the city, and they have come to the place that the way they reach people is they have come to the point now where they have started a gambling ministry. They went out and bought a bunch of gambling tables, and they set up a thing, and they play poker on the thing there, and all the money has to go to a particular ministry. But the bottom line is, where did that come from? I bet you wish Paul would have had that key back when he was trying to build the church in the book of Acts. How did we get from that? The guy that started that church was an old radio evangelist who believed that book for the Bible, cover to cover. That boy, dead now for about 25 years, he would turn over in his grave if he walked into that; he would have a heart attack before he walked by the first ashtray. How do we get from here to gambling now in the church as an okay thing to do? Does anybody have an explanation of how a New Testament Bible-believing church that is supposed to win people to Christ, be involved in the ministry, how in the world do we justify a gambling ministry? Oh, I know the answer is simple: You are nuts. You have lost your mind. You absolutely have become insane. It is never right to do wrong to get the chance to do right. It just is not. I do not know what to tell you. They are not pastors anymore; they are CEOs. There is a large church in this city that does not call their members "members" anymore. You know what you are now? You are "giving units." You are not members; you are giving unit number 43, 47, 49. Where do we get this? We are nuts. We are absolutely nuts. We are crazy. Absolutely crazy. You mess with the book, God messes with your mind, and what God does, He takes us.

Now, I will show you this thing. Matthew 3. I told you we were going to get there sooner or later. Now I want to show you God's humor in this last baptism. I laid this whole foundation out: "Let God be true and every man a liar." This whole concept of Solomon: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments." We have been here before. This is where we studied John's baptism. Now watch this. Here it comes. I will show you nuts.

Matthew 3:1-12

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

This is our last baptism. John down here tells them to repent. We know it is the kingdom of heaven; we studied that before. Now we know that this is Israel; there is no church here. All during this time, we see this thing that God is presenting Himself to the nation of Israel. Look what He says in verse 11. Here is your last baptism: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." There is John's baptism; we studied that. "He that cometh after me, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." That is the one we saw in Acts 2; we already studied that. "And with fire." This last baptism is called the baptism of fire.

Let me show you God's sense of humor when you do not believe the book, when you do not take the book as you find it, and you do not lay the thing out. You want to see God messing with somebody's mind? You want to see somebody come into the place where they take the thing and lose their perspective? You want to see somebody absolutely insane? Here is what you have: You have a whole group of people running around this city, running around this country, and at the end of every church service—and I have been there, I have been there and heard them, I know what I am talking about—at the end of the church service, they have everybody come down, and you are down there praying, and what you are praying for—and this is the same crowd that I told you last week that teaches that when you get saved, you do not get all the Holy Ghost, you are supposed to pray to get some more—and you know what they do? They get them down there, and they get people praying for the baptism of the Holy Ghost and for the fire of God to fall on them. They are down there saying, "Oh, I heard one preacher get up there, he said, 'Pray for the fire! Pray for the fire! Pray for the fire!'" And they are down there, hands are up. You thought you were in a hold-up someplace. They are down there, got their hands waving in the air, and they are talking back and forth saying, "Oh, God, bring me the Holy Spirit! Put on me the fire! Put on me the fire!" You see the context of that fire? That fire is going to hell. That is the lake of fire. What in the world is a child of God praying, who is saved, on his way to heaven, praying to get the baptism of the fire of hell? I mean, what are we doing here? Every service they come down forward, they pray to God, they lift up their hands, and they beg God for the baptism of the Holy Ghost and the baptism of fire. The fire here, let us take the context. Let us do a terrible thing. Let us look at this thing in context. Look at Matthew 3 again. He said in verse 10: "And now also the

axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:" there is John's baptism. "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear:" that is Christ. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:" Look at verse 12: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat"—saved people—"into the garner" or the barn, "but he will burn up the chaff"—unsaved people—"with unquenchable fire." When you do not believe what you read, and you do not believe the Bible, and you do not stay in the context, what you do is get a bunch of God's people asking God to send them to hell. You have saved people who are saved and probably on their way to heaven asking for God to dump the fire of hell on them.

Now I want you to see something here. You are going to see the context here. I am going to read these verses to you; you just listen to me. You can look them up on your own.

Revelation 20:10-15

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

God has a lake of fire. Here is how it works: When you got saved, you got immersed with the Spirit of God, like your Father, because you become God's child. When you are unsaved, at your final destination, a lake, you get immersed with the judgment of God that God has reserved for the devil. You realize that hell was never prepared for you? Never prepared for you. The Bible says in Matthew 25:41:

Matthew 25:41

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Never prepared for you. But you see, when you trust Christ, you get immersed with the Holy Spirit of God. When you do not trust Christ, and you die and go to the lake of fire, you get immersed with the judgment that the devil gets. It is as simple as that. Not understanding this baptism of fire, and God's people talking about it because they will not believe the Bible, they do not believe the Bible, and they will not spend the time to study the scriptures, and they want to

put their preconceived ideas already before what the Bible says, down there praying for God to dump on them the fire, the fire, the fire.

Isaiah 66:22-24

22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.

23 And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

24 And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

You see, this last baptism is a baptism of an unsaved man or unsaved woman. You are in a lake, and for all of eternity, the Bible says that there are carcasses of men. Just like down in the south end of Jerusalem, you have the greatest picture of it in all the Bible; it was called Gehenna. Gehenna was the trash dump. Gehenna is where they dumped all the bodies that died in Jerusalem. It was the trash heap where they continually had a fire going 24/7 to burn the dead bodies and to burn the trash. You would go down there and you would look at the rotted meat, and you would look at the maggots, and you would look at all of the garbage and all the dead carcasses, and it would just be burning all the time, all the time, down the south end of Jerusalem. Well, let me tell you something, down the south end of this universe someday, there is going to be a trash dump, and it is going to be where God dumps every piece of trash that would not accept His righteous Son. It is where the great laugh is going to come in, that God is going to laugh at the calamity of unsaved man, that God is going to have them and laugh the laugh of condemnation because men and women thought they were smarter than God, thought that their righteousness was better than God. The last thing an unsaved man is going to hear—and I know this is not popular, but it is Bible—the last thing a man or woman is going to hear as they drop the millions of light-years into that lake of fire, where for all eternity they are going to be just down at the bottom and come back up to the top, and down at the bottom, as the seething fire of the millions and the millions of the carcasses of men and women who have transgressed against God, where they rejected the baptism of the Holy Ghost, so they received the baptism of fire in the lake of fire for all eternity. That is where it is headed. For some stupid Christian to stand down there and say, "Oh, God, put the fire of God on me," and not even know the context of what they are talking about.

You know what the greatest tragedy about going to hell is? You do not have to go. The Bible says it was never prepared for you and for me. It was prepared for the devil and his angels. But you see, that old sin, that is the number one sin of man, that was the number one sin in the Bible, that old sin that we think that we are smarter than God, that old sin that we somehow just think that we are the exception to the rule, do not we? That we just cannot come to church, we just cannot get into that Bible, we just cannot stand a book that when you read it, it begins to read you, that when you open those pages, it opens you up, and you do not go through two pages that the Holy Spirit of God says, "You need to change this, you need to change this, you need to change that,

you need to change this." Oh, that is why we do not read it. I am going to tell you something, folk, and it is the greatest thing you ever learned: You are better off just giving up and giving in to Him, because all you are going to do is wind up deceiving yourself. You are not going to beat Him. There is nobody, the greatest, wisest, holiest man that ever walked this planet, the greatest stimulating mind that ever existed, could not get around God. You know what the old black folks used to sing down south? They said, "He is so high you cannot get over Him, and He is so low you cannot get under Him, and He is so wide you cannot get around Him; you must come in at the door." You cannot get around Him. When you think you can, and you come to that book, and you think that book is not God's Word, and you think that you can beat it, God takes you in your own heart, and you deceive yourself.

VII. Conclusion: Surrender to God's Truth

What I thank God about is this, going back to my opening statement: I know a lot of people that never get to where I am at at 56 until they are 70, 80 years old, and then it is too late. I figured it out 15 years ago, and I got it convinced in my mind 10 years ago, and understand the thing today like I have never understood it before. The bottom line is this: The two men in the Bible made the greatest statements. One is, when it is all said and done, and you have had everything in life, and you have looked at it, and everything that has just glittered and sparkled in your eyes that you think is everything, that is the life that you want, at the end of the day, the conclusion of the whole matter by the wisest man that ever lived, that put everybody on this planet as a rank amateur, said, "Fear God and keep His commandments." The greatest Christian ever lived in the New Testament, who had the greatest education in the world, said, "You know what? I have come to the conclusion to fear God and keep His commandments." I am going to tell you something, the two greatest things you will ever do in life is approach God that way. Focus those things in your life, that this life has nothing to offer. You might as well just give it in to God and say, "Lord, it is Yours," because you only deceive yourself, and that is what is wrong with God's people today. God loves them, but it is a simple fact, folks: You mess with the book, you mess with His mind, He messes with you. He is not going to let you take that book that He paid the price for, and millions and millions of Christians down through history paid in their blood for that book. He will not let you take that thing and just make it like Time, Life, Newsweek, Mad Magazine. You are not going to do it. We live in a Christianity world today that does not understand that, and that is why we think we can live our lives the way we want to, and we are going to skate clean.

You may not like what I said today. Some of you may be downright mad at me. But the bottom line is this: When we get to the judgment seat of Christ, we will find out who was right and who was wrong, because no matter what, I still believe this: "Let God be true and every man a liar," and at the end of the day, "Fear God and keep His commandments; it is the whole duty of man." Anything other than that, you are going to deceive yourself in it, and God is going to take you in your own heart, and He is going to give you the lie that you want to believe, and you are going to justify yourself, and you are going to go home to hell right up to that door, just thinking that you are everything that you ought to be. I have had some young men, just as worldly and as stupid and as dumb things that we have all did as young men, sit right there when they know they are

wrong and they know they are not right, and try to justify and rationalize and tell me how right they are with God in the middle areas. They are insane. But you see, that is what happens. God takes you in your own heart, and you just have to throw it down. You say, "God, I surrender. I surrender." We used to sing the old song years ago in the churches, when they used to give invitations with music, and some of them still do, they sing that little song, "All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give, I surrender all." That is what it takes, because you belong to God. If you are a child of God, you have no business living like you are living. If you are not right with God and you are playing some pretentious game, you need to get right with God.

All I told you today, and I say the same thing that Jesus said to the people when He preached hard things to them: "Have I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Let me tell you something: If your house was on fire and you were sleeping in bed, and I was driving by, I saw the flame shooting out the window, and I broke into your house, and smoke was so thick I could not find you, and I crawled up the steps and felt my way along the line, and you were unconscious in bed, and I dragged you out and got you down, and they revived you and saved your life, would you be upset with me because I did that? That is all I am trying to do for you today, because we have been deceived. We have really believed that "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We really think we are the exception to the rule, and we are not. He said it: "Young man, live your life to the fullest. Whatever your eyes want, whatever you want to do, whatever you want to get involved in, hold nothing back. But young man, know this: God will bring you into judgment." There is a judgment coming for you and me. The judgment seat of Christ for the unsaved people is a Great White Throne Judgment. You got saved, you got immersed in the Spirit of God by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. An unsaved man in that day is going to get a baptism of fire in a lake, and he is going to roll up and down for eternity in that fire as a carcass because he is going to get the body just like his father. "You have your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." That is where it winds up.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Let me just say this to you this morning, and then we are going to be done today. I saved that last baptism because I wanted to show you a number of things. My emphasis really was not on the baptism. My emphasis was on how people get confused and deceived in that baptism, and it all comes down to the fact that they do not recognize that the book that you have got in your lap today is the mind of God. You can wiggle any way you want. You can justify it any way you want. You can try to lie to yourself and deceive yourself any way you want. The bottom line is this: He is going to bring every account into judgment. It is just simple as that. You may not like what I said. You may not even agree with what I said. Forget me. "Let God be true and every man a liar." I just told you what the book said, and I am telling you. Every head bowed, every eye closed. Maybe you are here this morning, and you are a young man or a lady, and you are not sure if you died right now you would go to heaven. You do not have the assurance in your heart at this particular point in time that if you died right now, you know your sins are forgiven. You know the Bible says you cannot be. Maybe you are a young man here. Maybe you are one of those young men that I talked about this morning, that you think life is wide open for you, and you think you are going to beat it,

because one of the things about young people, we all think we are invincible. We all think we can go the distance. I never met a young man in my life that did not think he could beat God at His own game, and that is what makes God laugh, the fact that you and I could beat God at the game of life. It is not going to happen. Maybe you are here today, and maybe you are a full-grown man or woman, and you know in your life you are a long way from God.