

I. The Seven Things That Changed When You Got Saved

We began our opening lessons on the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. Probably already you are beginning to see how these seven things are seven major areas that you have to get down. For our church, or any church really, to grow to the point where it becomes effective, it is these seven things that you have to recognize in your life and grow into them. These are the seven things that you really have to understand about yourself before you can be effective in ministry, working with people.

We talked a couple of weeks back, and this has all been tied together, about how God has three plans throughout the Word of God. We know the first plan is that God had a plan for the universe. We went through that on Sunday and a couple of Sundays ago, and I laid it out for you. God has a plan for planet Earth; there is a reason why He created Earth. We talked about that. Then we focused on the fact that God has a plan for you and I. There is a reason why, if you are a member of this church, you are a member of this church. We have a mission as a church that we need to accomplish. Most Christians never accomplish it in their life because they never have the self-discipline in their life to really be effective. The reason why they do not have the self-discipline is because they never understand what really took place the day they got saved.

Seven things changed about you, and they changed instantaneously. It was not like the 12 days of Christmas. Everything that these seven things I am talking about changed the instant you got saved. They are not always apparent; you obviously have to grow into them where they really become productive in your life. Some of God's people never grow into them.

We talked about the first one in 2 Corinthians 5:17, where it says that you are a new creature in Christ Jesus once you got saved. Once you become a child of God, you become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away; behold, all things become new. We talked about that as the first and foremost and fundamental thing that you need to understand about yourself and myself. We need to understand that the old things are passed away.

We talked about how we get our ideas shaped about ourselves by the way we grow up, by the way people treat us, and by our feelings. Many of God's people, the day they get saved, have inadequacies and complexes. They see themselves as an inferior person. Many times their emotions have overwhelmed them, and they struggle with relationships, they struggle with people, and they certainly begin to struggle with the Word of God. It takes this concept firmly ingrained in your mind of understanding who you are in Christ Jesus.

II. My Philosophy on Ministry

I have a philosophy in ministry. I have always had this philosophy; it is what I base it on. I do not know if I have ever told it to this group collectively. Many of you who work with me or have worked with me on levels know I have talked to you about that, and you know where I come from. But here is my philosophy on ministry, and this is basically the philosophy of our church.

I understand a great truth. There are a lot of things that are different about me than most pastors. Some people like that, some people do not like that. But whether that is the case or not, do not be talking while I am talking, even if it is a good thing about what I said. You would rather have me this way than any other way, would not you? Yeah, you are brainwashed though.

Here is what I have come to; I went through this a long time ago. This church is not for everybody. I do not think any church is for everybody. You have pastors out there that just get it in their mind that their church is for everybody, and everybody should just love their church. I never fall for that fallacy. I know that. I know the reason why God gives churches. I understand that not everybody that comes to our church is going to stay at our church. I know that. So I do not get all upset about it, and I am not under the illusion that everybody that is going to come here is just going to fall in love with this place and love it.

My job is not to worry about that. My job is to make sure that this church is as close on the dime of truth as it can be. That is my job. I believe any pastor's job is to make sure that whatever their church does is based on the Bible, based on the scriptures that you would have to dig a long time. If you have a problem with my church, our church, your church, I will sit down with anybody anytime, anywhere, and I encourage anybody to show me where our church is off-center because I want it on. If you are right, then we will change whatever we have to change because we are wasting our time playing church if our church is not based on the fundamental foundations in the book of Acts that the New Testament local church should be grounded on. We are just wasting our time if we do not do that.

So that produces an element of truth. I understand that in the world we are living in today, most people do not want truth. They really do not. I understand that, so therefore I do not get my feelings hurt when somebody comes and kind of window shops. In fact, I will tell you, you notice we have not had anybody show up that sees the sign anymore. Do you know why that is? It is not because we are not getting calls. But I got sick and tired of people calling me, and they would say this. They would say, "Well, I saw your sign that we went by." And I said, "Well, good." And he says, "Can I ask you a couple of questions about your church?" And I said, "Absolutely." So they will go through the questions. The questions always run the same way. The questions will be, "Well, what kind of music program do you have?" Then they will want to know what kind of programs we have. They will come down, and they will want to know what kind of Baptist we are. They want to know everything, and now they are giving me the third degree. The bottom line is they are going to make a decision now if this is just the church for me.

Well, I do not have a problem with that. But you know what? I had to have the same right. So the reason why they have not been showing up anymore is because once they are done with their questions, I ask them some questions. It is tit for tat, is not it? The last guy, I went down a whole series of things, and he said, "Well, thank you very much." And I said, "Well, you are welcome, but may I ask you some questions?" I said, "Are you looking for a church?" And he says, "Yes." And I said, "Well, then you asked me those questions because you are looking to see if this church fits into your criteria. Is that correct?" He said, "That is right." He said, "Well, we are looking for people, but there is a criteria that I am looking for. So I was gracious enough to

answer your question. Would you be gracious enough to answer mine? How many times did you read your Bible through last year?” Suddenly the Spirit of God changed. You see how it works?

No, I am not such a fool as to think that everybody that comes to this church is going to like this church or going to love this church or going to like me. Because the bottom line is that is just the way it is today. But I know this, and here is my philosophy. I do not fall into the trap that God brings everybody here so they will join here. I do not fall into that trap. Do you know what I believe? I believe that every one of us in our lives has issues that we have to deal with, obstacles of spiritual growth. Every one of us. Some of you, it was in the basic aspect that you needed to get saved. Some of you are already saved, but there is some obstacle in your life. Like we talked about maybe last week, maybe you are an emotional person. Maybe you are somebody who cannot deal with issues very well. Maybe you are, I do not know, whatever the case. Maybe all your life you have had this struggle to get over something. So you know what God does? God brings you to a place where you have to face that issue. And then you are faced with either running to God or running from God.

I believe that that is why God has churches. I believe that people want to play this game, and God is not into playing games. So I believe that God will take you someplace that preaches the truth. It will identify your problem. Oh, it may take six months. It may take a year. It may take two weeks. But it identifies your problem. And then you have to make a conscious decision: I am going to overcome my problem, or you are going to be like the guy on the phone. Suddenly you do not want to answer the questions anymore.

A year and a half ago, we had a guy that, and I liked this kid. He was with us from the day we started, and I really liked him. Suddenly, after about a year and a half, I did not see him anymore on Sunday. So I started to inquire around. I called him a couple of times, and finally I got down to the bottom line. Somebody else later told me that what he told me was that he likes to go around and help start churches. And now he felt like he did everything here, and then he moved on to someplace else. Now what he told somebody else was, he says, “Well,” he said, “you know,” he said, “yeah, I need to go to another church because Bob just tries to control people too much.”

Now, how long have we known each other? Eighteen years. Have I ever tried to control you? Have I ever tried to control your life? Have I, Jimmy? How long, Jimmy, know me? Well, same time. Have I ever tried to control Jimmy’s life? Never. Never would. John, John, how long have we known each other? How many? I married you and Jan, did not I? One of the few mistakes I made in life. Have I ever tried to control your life? Ever? In 28 years, ever, ever? Let us find somebody younger. Kyle, have I ever tried to control you? No, I do not know. I said control your wife. And I said control your wife, not his life. You only heard half of that, and your yap was right. I said, “Kyle, control your wife.”

Now, if you are going to be in ministry, if you are going to be—I did not see you. You too. Good. Now I told you, if you want to be a really good Christian and know the Word of God, you do not have to know Greek and Hebrew, but you do need to know Christian gibberish. Now let me translate that for you. The fact that Bob likes to control people’s lives. Let me translate that for

you. That translates out as, “I do not want the Holy Spirit of God leading my life. I am not man enough to go out on a hill on a full moon, rip my clothes off, and scream at God. So I am going to blame it on Bob.” See? Now that is how that works.

Do you think that bothers me? Not at all. Do you know why? Because I understand the philosophy of me. Do you know what that Bible is? That Bible is a sharp, two-edged sword. It will send you to heaven or it will send you to hell. And for a Christian, it will make you or break you. It will make you face your issues and deal with them, or face your issues and blame somebody else for them and move on down the road. That is the book. And that is the way the philosophy of this church has to work. I mean, there are some people that God brings in here, and they are faced with it. And God simply says to them, through Thursday night, through Sunday morning, through discipleship, or whatever, God will say to them, “Sweetheart, you are not going any farther until you deal with this issue.” And then they are faced with a decision. And they either go the way that a lot of them go, or they will say, “You know what? I will deal with the issue,” and then they move on from there.

I want to tell you something. Your Christian life is nothing more than a series of issues that you and I have to deal with. You get saved, and your Christian life is a spiral upward. You get saved right here, and you move around that spiral, and you come up a little bit, and then you have an obstacle. When you climb over that obstacle, you move up a little farther, you hit another obstacle, and then you crawl a little more, and you hit another obstacle. Life is not obstacle-free. The Christian life is an upward journey, but you have to overcome the obstacles to keep the spiral going up. The obstacles are what is wrong with you and me, what we have to perfect in ourselves, what we have to fix in ourselves. It goes back to what we talked about last week.

III. The Ability to Love God

Today I want to look at the next thing that changed, that took place the day you got saved. Remember now, all these things are immediate, even though they are not apparent. For this, we want to come over to Matthew chapter 22.

Matthew 22:37

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. We thank You for today. We thank You for the opportunity to open up the scriptures, to look within them, Lord, and for it to change our hearts. Lord, I pray that You will take the men and the women in this church that want to buy into the Word of God, that want to believe that they are part of an overall mission of God, that this church, by God’s design, has been set apart to do the job in these last days. And I pray that You will bring men and women in that are willing to overcome the things in their life, to get past the little things that hold them up, and that they will be able to grow and become everything that God wants them to be. And Lord, we thank You and praise You for the proving aspect of the Word of God. We just ask all this in Jesus’ name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now, the next thing that changed about you was our ability to love God and God's ability to fellowship with us through that love. We are going to destroy some misconceptions today, and I am going to build with this concept some great things. Mikey, you and I were talking Thursday night. Remember you asked me about those things, about why God did what He did. Well, I told you you are going to get your answer today, and if you do not get your answer, then you come over to my house, and I will help you put the rest of it together if I do not cover it all today. You see, it is important to me that you get what you want. This church is not here for—you are not here for my benefit; I am here for yours, and we are all here for the Lord's. So you need to get out of it what you need to get out of it. But with this one here, you begin to see some great biblical principles.

As an unsaved man, and I want you to—I want to talk about some basics today, and most of you probably already know this, but let us start back so we get everybody on the same page. As an unsaved man or woman, we do not have the ability to love God. We just do not. Now, once you get saved, you do have the ability to love God, but the problem is most of God's people choose not to love God, and they continue to do their own thing. We are going to talk about that in just a little bit.

The Bible says that, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, with all of thy mind, and all with all thy heart, with all of thy soul, with all of thy mind." I want to say this before we get started: that really is the bottom line job for every child of God on planet Earth. If you are saved, you have one main function to get to in life, and everything else you do in life should come toward this focal point in your life, and that is to get to the place in your heart where you love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and all of your mind. That needs to be understood today, that that is the bottom line function.

Now, I know that when you get saved, you are not there yet. I told you that you have the ability to—it is immediate, but it is not apparent. You have to grow through it. When you got saved, as I got saved, there was a process that I had to go through that I began to evaluate what was real in my life and what was not. What was worth my investment and what was not. What was really of value to God and what was not. Sometimes it takes a while to clear the boards, but you should be on a road. You should be within a process of working toward getting to the place where you love God with all of your heart, with all of your mind, and all of your soul.

I have to tell you that will be the single most hardest thing you will ever do in your life. The hardest thing as a child of God you will ever do is to try on a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week, 365-day-a-year basis to love God with all of your heart, with all of your mind, and all of your soul. That is what your goal should be, but I am going to tell you right up front, it is going to be the hardest thing in the world to do, but not for the reason that you think. When I say something like that, the average Christian thinks in their mind, "Well, that is because, you know, Bob said it many times, you know, His ways are not my ways, His thoughts are not my thoughts, you know, He is holy, I am not." No, that is not the reason, because the moment you got saved, when these seven things changed, those reasons go away. You now have the ability to love Him with all of your heart, mind, and soul.

Do you know what keeps you from doing it? Our definition of love. All of our lives as a child of God, we have to fight the issue of loving God the way we want to love Him based on loving Him the way the Bible says we have to love Him. Let me tell you what is wrong with every one of us in here, including me. We have got our own ideas about what we think the Bible means, what it says. We have our own concepts about Christianity, about God, and 99.999% of the time, they have nothing to do with the Bible, and getting over that to get to God is where we struggle. That is why everything we do, everything I tell you, everything I teach you, brings you right back to this book because this book is the only thing we have that defines in every aspect how to love God.

IV. God's Love and Holiness

We live in a situation today where not only the world but the Christian world, everybody has their definition of love. Today, God loves everybody. You have the liberals that want to do away with capital punishment. How many times have I heard them say this: "Well, we should not kill our fellow man because God loves men, and God is love." God does not love all men. We are going to get to that in a minute, but I am just telling you. I am going to explain to you today how God looks at an unsaved man, how God looks at a saved person, and then I am going to tell you how the death of Christ relates to God looking at both those people. You have to get this down. You have to get this down to get what this great teaching is.

Now, you know what the idea is: we are all God's children. No, we are not. We are all God's creation, but that does not make us all God's children. The Bible's definition of the love of God is different. If you started going around to the churches and just called them on the phone and said, "Can you give me a definition of love?" they would give you everything in the world. Do you know what the Bible's definition of love is? This is what forms the basis for us understanding God's love and how I respond to God's love.

God's love is not the flowers. God's love is not the beautiful sunshine. God's love is not the clean, fresh air. God's love is not the wind out of the north. God's love is not this. It is not little children. It is not puppies. It is not cats. It is not God's love. It is God's wrath poured out on His Son for you and for me and my sin. Now, when you start with that basic definition of God's love, then you have something to work with. You miss that. You make God's love the trees. You make God's love the flowers. You make God's love this. You make God's love that. And before you are done, everything is in God's love, and that is a fatal mistake. God's love, laid out and defined in the Bible, is God sending His Son and God pouring out His wrath because He loved this world, and His Son bore that wrath for you and for me.

I am going to tell you something. Loving God has to start with you and I understanding how God loved us before we got saved and then how it changed the day we got saved. This is a major picture of your puzzle if you want to grow up spiritually. I will save you six months of spiritual growth today in one hour and 15-minute lesson. I mean, it is real easy. It is real easy. How many times have I heard the standard teaching? Do you know what the standard teaching is? Here is the standard teaching: God loves the sinner but He hates the sin. How many times have I heard

that? How many times have I heard a preacher get up there and he talks about the fact that God loves the sinner but He hates the sin? And they base that on John 3:16, lifting it out of context.

Now, I am going to give you a Bible picture of an unsaved man, which is totally different from what you get today. Let me just say this before I get started: God not only hates sin, He hates unsaved people. The quicker you grasp that great concept, the better off you are going to understand God's love.

Here is how it works:

1. The Bible says in John 9:31 that an unsaved man prays, God does not hear his prayer. God does not recognize the prayer of an unsaved man.
2. An unsaved man's marriage. If he is married to an unsaved woman, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 7:14, God does not recognize that marriage. If they have children in that union of an unsaved man and an unsaved woman, the Bible says in the same passage, God does not recognize their children.
3. The Bible says an unsaved man's mind, as far as God is concerned, is an unsaved man.
4. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world," yeah, but read the last verse in the chapter, verse 36, says an unsaved man, the wrath of God abideth on him already. Do you know what that says? If you are unsaved here this morning, you are as good in hell with a door shut, locked up, and a key rusted up and cannot get out. In God's mind, if you are unsaved, you are in hell. See? I mean, the quicker you grasp that.

Now let me tell you what the problem is. I will tell you what the problem is. God's people today have caused this problem. God's people today have come to the point where we have forgotten that God has standards of holiness. I am as confused today as I know how to become. I really am. I really am. I am sorry. I am as confused today as I ever hoped to be if it was not for this book.

I was driving down the road the other day, and I was listening to the radio, and I heard an advertisement. Now, this is not an indictment for or against. Do not get mad at me. I am just telling you what I heard. This just added to my confusion. You obviously are a lot smarter than I am. I am sure you have it figured out, but here I was driving down there. Heard an advertisement on the radio. I do not know what it was. I know it was supposed to be Christian. Up here at Smithville Lake, they had a one-way, one-something, one-thing musical deal. Now, this was on the radio, and they are advertising a Christian concert over the weekend that was based on God, Christ, Christians getting together, and in the middle of the deal, it said, "Drinking will be permitted, but in moderation."

Now I am confused. I will tell you what my problem is. I do not know what you have to do anymore to be a sinner. When I was growing up, everything that sinners did, now Christians do. I am confused. When I deal with somebody, I do not even know what to ask them. Are you a child murderer? How far down do I have to go to find a sinner? What we used to do as sin now is accepted in Christianity, and I am confused this morning. Where is the standard of holiness that God has? Where is the standard of right and wrong that God says as a Christian you do not do this? And yet, when you are up there, I promise you, you saw 50,000 people up there going through the motion, thinking that God was there.

Now, you know how I know He was not? Now I know this is going to make some of you bad, but that is okay. That is what this church is all about. Boy, am I glad I said that before I got into this. Do you know what they do up there? They stand up there, and they actually think that God—you know how I know He is not? Let me tell you something. Now I am going to pull a terrible trick on you. I am going to use the Bible. In the Old Testament, when God came down to go through and meet with the children of Israel, do you know what they had to do? They had to take everything out of the camp that was against God's holiness, or He was not coming. Where in the world do we get the idea that we could have one foot in the world, one foot with God, and think that God is still going to be happy with everything? I do not know where that comes from.

Yeah, I know where it comes from. Do you know what man wants to do? He has done it in everything he does. Man wants to bring God down to his level. I love, I get these in the mail. Let me show you how it works. We came home last night from softball, and there on the thing was a message from some idiot out there, wherever he was, wanting all our Christians and all our churches. They are having a seminar down in Lake of the Ozarks that you can have a perfect marriage in one week. For a fee. I got this the other day. I love these. I have a whole library of these. I love them. I love it.

Now, this guy puts out this thing, and this thing here, to me as a pastor, it is going to improve my church. Now I read through this whole thing because I love it. Do you know what? There is not one reference to the Word of God here anywhere. Not one. There is not one reference to the Bible anywhere, shape or form. I will tell you something else. The word Christian is not in this anywhere. There are no more Christians. Remember he is saying that? This guy comes to your church. He takes his program without the Bible. Takes his program, and the key thing here is that you are all going to—there is no more Christians. In my day, you had men and women who grew up and were powerful in the Lord, powerful in the Word of God, and they were strong Bible-believing Christians. They are gone. I bet you if you took a trip to Washington D.C. and went through the Smithsonian Institute, there with the T-Rexes and the Brontosaurus would be a man with a Bible. It is extinct now. The Christian. Gone. No reference to the Bible. No reference to the Christian anywhere in it. But when you are done now, instead of being a Bible-believing Christian, you get certain, you become a—oh, I love this—certified human behavior consultant. Now that is what I am talking about. Can you just see, and it only costs you 500 bucks.

You know what? I am an idiot. Last Thursday night, do you know how long it took me to put that thing together Thursday night? I could not even have him count up the hour. You know what? I am the biggest fool in this world. That guy is going to make 100 million dollars off of stupid Christians to make them certified human behavioral consultants. I just spent an hour and a half, and I laid out the Word of God. It took me what? Six months to do it, and I did not get a dime out of it. Now, what is wrong with me? Man, I had a bit up here saying I had to push this thing. I should have got me a—what do you think I could have done if I had a got me a multi-colored brochure just like that? With my picture on the front. With the behind-the-scenes Israeli tanks rolling on Lebanon. Lebanese Syrian rockets running into Tel Aviv. Children huddled in their mother's arms looking up, and me standing, holding up the Word of God in front of it, saying, "Come Thursday night. Come in here. I will tell you when the end of the world will come. I will

show you how to, for another five bucks, I will show you how to build a bomb shelter.” I can lay low. I can go through the whole thing, and I would have made a million dollars. But you know why I cannot? You know why I will not? You know why I do not? Because that book says, “Freely get, freely receive, freely give.” That is why you cannot do it. You absolutely just cannot do it. But you know what? That is what they want.

Now, in this little thing here, you have this. I love this. You get a spiritual gifts profile questionnaire, and then to figure it out, you get a spiritual gift graph. The spiritual gift graph helps you put together your behavioral blends. And then I love this. For the Bible says, “Oh, I love it. Choose this day.” You see, the Bible says, “Choose this day whom you will serve.” Let me tell you, this is the modern-day 20th Christian. This is what the modern-day 20th Christian does. “Choose this day whom you will serve.” Oh, I love it. “Choose this day who and where you will serve.” Oh, I like it. Yeah, choose it yourself. Do not let God lead you. Choose it yourself. You see, that is where we are at. That is the mess we are in. And the standard teaching is that we are all God’s—God just loves everybody. And it comes because Christians have brought God down to man’s level and done his very best, level best, to get rid of any holy standard of God. Then it does not matter what you do. It does not matter where you go. It does not matter how you live. You are still a Christian. And I am telling you, friend, I am telling you.

Somebody asked me the other week, he says, “Have you church done that new Bible study yet, 40 Days to a Purpose-Driven Church?” I said, “No.” First of all, I do not want a purpose-driven church; I want a Holy Spirit-led church. I am not into giving you a purpose and then driving you. I am into you figuring this out for yourself and saying, “That is where I want to invest my life,” and then let that drive you. See? But what we have done is we have brought it down. And an unsaved person, God cannot love them. The Bible says the carnal mind is against God in Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 5 says, “Before we were saved, we were the enemies of God, but we were reconciled by the death of His Son.”

V. The Purpose of Christ's Death

This brings us to a great question. Here comes Michael. You know, there are many aspects to the crucifixion, but Mike’s question was, as many of your questions were, and it was my question, and this answers a lot of questions: Why did Christ do it the way He did it? Why did God—I mean, let us face it, God could have done it any way He wanted to do it. God could have done salvation and a plan of salvation any way that He wanted to do it. God was not limited by anything. Before anybody knew anything, God could have chosen to do it any way. Why did He choose to have His Son come down and die an agonizing death on the cross of Calvary? And what is this thing about the blood, Mike? What is this thing about the blood?

You know, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, they call us Baptists; they call us a slaughterhouse religion because we have blood, we talk about. They do not have any blood. They do not have any—they do not believe you get saved by the blood; they believe you get baptized in the tub. No blood, see, no blood, so we are a slaughterhouse religion. Do you know why there is blood? Do you know why there has to be blood? Do you know without the blood why we are all in trouble? And do you know how the blood fits into an unsaved man, an unsaved woman, even

before you got saved? You see, we always talk about the blood saving us, and that is true, but boy, there is more of an aspect to Christ's death on the cross than that. I mean, there certainly is.

Now, this answers in a threefold way:

5. God is a structured God; He is an ordered God, and He has a system of what He does.
6. God never violates His own principle. God knew that if you were ever going to take something away that was guilty, somebody was going to have to pay the price that was innocent. You find that all the way back with Adam and Eve. God put Adam and Eve down in the garden. He told them what to do and what not to do. They disobeyed, and they now found out they were naked. What is the first thing Adam and Eve did? They ran over, picked them off some fig leaves, but he gets some bigger leaves, fig leaves, and they tried to cover their nakedness. "See, I am not naked anymore." God says, "That will not work. That will not work." He says, "You cannot take leaves and cover your nakedness because your nakedness is sin, and you are a sinner, and as a sinner, you are guilty. The only way to cover your sins is to get something, to talk somebody innocent into dying for the guilty." Do you know what God did? God went out, killed some lambs, took some skins, and said, "Here, put that on." That story reverberated down through the Bible, through Cain, who brought the right sacrifice, or Abel, who brought the right sacrifice, Cain, who did not. Down to Abraham, right down through the Bible, till Jesus Christ came down and died for you and for me.
7. God, who is a loving God and a holy God. You see, here is the deal: God not only hates sin, but He has to hate the sinner. Do you know why? Because in the Old Testament, or before you are saved, your sinfulness and your very being are one. God cannot separate you from your sin. It is impossible for God to hate sin and love the sinner. The sinner and the sin are one, and God cannot separate them. He cannot. That is why when you get saved, an operation made without hands, Colossians chapter two, spiritual circumcision, which the whole Christian world knows nothing about, that separates the body of the sins from your soul. Now God can fellowship with you because you have been separated from your sin, and do you know what was between you and your sin? Him, the Holy Spirit of God. You are sealed today. See how that thing works?

Now that is how it works for a Christian. How does God deal with it for an unsaved man? The shedding of innocent blood for all men was the only way that it could be done. So God had His Son come down and die on the cross, and then God looks at every unsaved man through that blood in Christ, and He sees and loves an unsaved man in Christ. The only way He can do it. He sees an unsaved man and an unsaved woman through the blood of His Son that was shed on Calvary's cross. That is the only way God can love because God is holy, so God has to look through something that is holy, and He looks through the blood of His innocent Son, and only through the blood in Christ can He love an unsaved person. If you do not grasp that, you are not going anywhere.

Now He has the ability to love unsaved people because He sees them through His Son, that blood was shed for the world, and that is the only way a holy God could love an unholy me before I got saved. Do you know what is the same way in the Old Testament? We are studying the book of Exodus right now. You know that the Old Testament people in the Old Testament did not have

access to God like you and I do. God could not fellowship with them. There are certain men that God met with: Noah, Abraham, and Jeremiah, that are exceptions to the rules based on what God wants to do, but there is no way. Do you know how God dealt with the nation of Israel? Do you know how God saw the nation of Israel? Every year at the Day of Atonement, the high priest went in, offered a sacrifice, and the high priest alone put the blood and sprinkled it on the Holy of Holies, and they were good for another year, and God looked and fellowshiped with the nation of Israel through the high priest based on the blood of the mercy seat. Now God looks at an unsaved man through the blood of the high priest on the mercy seat. You do not have to be a theologian; you just have to have common sense.

VI. Loving People Unconditionally

Now, when you become a new creature in Christ Jesus, you and I are in Christ, and because you are in Christ, you now have the ability to love God, and God now has the ability to fellowship with you because of the blood and you being in Christ. This is where the spiritual growth process, this is where the process of spiritual growth really begins, and this is what changed the day you and I got saved. I am telling you, if you focus on these things, it will change everything about you, everything about you.

I am telling you, when you come to the point in your life that you learn to love God, it is the hardest thing you have to do. It is the thing that you focus on, and you have to recognize that you did not have the ability until you were in Christ, and the day you became a new creature in Christ Jesus, from that point on, you now, because you are in Him through His blood, you have the ability to love Him with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul. I will tell you something, you want to be a pastor, you want to work with people, you want to get to the place in your life where you come spiritually to the place where you can really be used of God, well, I am going to tell you something, loving God the right way and learning to love God the right way by His terms, not yours, is the only way that you are going to learn how to love lost people the right way. I am telling you now, you better learn this, especially if you are ever going to be part of ministry, because the ministry is people, and I am going to tell you right up front, the second hardest thing to do after getting to love God with all your heart, mind, and soul is sometimes to love people. I am just going to put it right up to you straight up. I am going to tell you, somebody said one time, "The ministry would be a great thing if it was not for people." Amen. My favorite saying is, "The more I am around people, the better I like dogs." Amen. Because dealing with people, saved and unsaved, can be a hard thing, but you know what? You do not have the ability after you are a Christian. See, before you are saved, it does not make any difference. You can choose who you love and who you do not. You do not have that option after you are saved. You do not have an option to choose who you love, who you do not love. You do not have that option. You do not have that option at all, and I am going to tell you on the next breath, some people are very unlovable.

Do you ever notice how this thing all lays itself out? Matthew 22:37 says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and all thy soul." That is hard enough, but then because God knew there were going to be people that were just going to be absolutely

impossible for us, He gave Mark 12:30, which says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Because sometimes it is going to take every fiber of your strength to do what is right when you do not want to do what is right.

I am telling you, you see, I know we are not under the Ten Commandments. Colossians chapter 2 says the Old Testament was taken out of the way, nailed to His cross. It is gone. But as a New Testament child of God, we are under a law, and that law in James 2:8 is called the royal law. In chapter 6:2, it is called the law of Christ. Christ laid it out in Matthew 22:36-39. We did not read the whole thing, but we are going to read it now, where He says this:

Matthew 22:36-39

> *36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?*

> *37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

> *38 This is the first and great commandment.*

> *39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

Let me tell you something, loving people is not a good idea. Loving people is not an option; it is a commandment. Do you know what? You cannot say you love God and get to the place where you love God with all your heart and mind and soul until you can look at people and love them no matter what the situation is.

I had a lady one time years ago, her and her husband were having some struggles, after we were having more than struggles, and she came in, and I tried to help her, and I said, “Look,” I said, “you need—you need to be a wife.” “You know what? I know he is an idiot, but you right now,” and this all may change, and it did, but I said, “Right now, you need to do the best job you can be so this thing does not go right down the line. Nobody ever can come back and say you did not do what is right.” I said, “Right now, you need to be the best wife you can, and you need to love him as your husband.” And she said, “Bob,” she says, “I cannot love him as my husband.” I said, “Okay.” She said, I said, “Then you need to love him as your neighbor.” “Well, you do not understand, I hate him.” And I said, “You do not understand, then love him as your enemy.” But you do not have any options. You do not have any options? You do not have any options?

Do you know what the problem is? We always take it too personal, and I am telling you, sometimes it can get very personal, but you have got to understand that I have to love people, you and I have to love people because Christ loved me, and the first time God looked at me, I did not look too hot. I am telling you, it means that—it means that you have to love people unconditionally. That does not mean you have to be their friend. It does not mean you have to be their buddies. It does not mean anything. It means that based on the Word of God, you and I do not have the option not to love anybody, and it is based on our loving God the way we should, teaches us to love people the way we should.

You know, in the book of 1 Corinthians, when you come all down through there, and you lay the whole thing out, we are going to study 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. I am going to hold that for a minute. I will get back to that in a second. I am not done here yet. What it means is this: it means that there are people who will hurt you. It means that there are people that will talk about you, that will lie about you, that will abuse you, that will betray you, and it means that there are people that will do that, and yet your love for God and your relationship with God and all that you have overrides that. I am telling you, Psalms 119:165 says, “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.” You know, I never let anybody, anybody, come in between me and Christ because the moment I do, that person is closer to Christ than I am. What I have got with God, what you should have with God, what we need to have with God, what God has given us in all of the things that God has put in our lives and how He has taken care of us, there should be nothing that somebody can take that from you because, boy, I will tell you what, the devil will try to get it to happen, and I am telling you, if you are not under—if you do not have the ability to put it under the blood, then you are going to be stuck in the mud. It is just that simple.

You say, “How do you do that?” That is it. It is easy to preach it. How do you do that? How in the world, when somebody hurts you, how in the world, when you get yourself beat up, how in the world do you love somebody who is unlovable? How do you do it? Well, you do it the same way God loved you when you were unlovable. You look at them through the blood. Oh, that is foreign today. Oh, is not it? Do you know why it is foreign? We take it personal. When somebody hurts us, we get so caught up in how it hurt us, we never think about how it hurt God. We think of how it ruined our day. We never stop and think how it damaged the cause of Christ. See? And when you look at it on the bigger picture, it does not matter what somebody does. It does not matter what somebody says. It does not matter. And they are good. I am telling you, if you are going to get in a ministry and you are going to work with people, they are going to hurt you, but you have got to love them anyhow. And when you cannot love them, you have got to love them through the blood by the same exact way God loved you and me when we were unlovable. That is how it works, and most of God’s people will never grasp that. They will never get it. They will never grow. They will never get over the obstacles in their life where they can love unconditionally.

VII. Forgiveness and Repentance

Yet, I have to say this to you: loving God God’s way is the key to forgiving God’s way. I am going to tell you right now, my friend, the concept of—we think when I think of God, the thing that overwhelms me about God is not only does God forgive, but God has the ability to forget. We think as human beings—I have heard preachers say it—“Well, God has the ability to forgive and forget, and we are human; we do not have the ability to forget.” Oh, yes, you do. Yes, you do. Do not you tell me that I got everything that Christ had and I did not get that one. I have the ability to forgive, and I have the ability to forget. It is the choice: do I want to grow to that point or not? That is the issue. You are not going to tell me that God gave me the ability to forgive, and God did not give me the ability to forget.

Do you know what gets you through? I will tell you what gets you through: when you look back at your own life and you see how we were and how before we were saved and how we hurt God and how we violated every principle of God, and yet at that day when we got saved, God not only forgave us, God forgot it in the person of Jesus Christ. Do you know what is wrong with God's people? They do not have anything with Jesus Christ to offset what is going on in their life. That is the problem.

Now, we all have our ways of monitoring our spiritual growth. Most of the time, it is wrong. I have known young men and young ladies, especially young men, get this mind and idea in their head: they think that you measure your spiritual growth by how much you know about God and God's Word. That is not the way it is. Sorry, that is not the way it is. Your spiritual growth is not based on how much you know; it is rather based on what you do with what you know. You want a yardstick for your spiritual growth? It is real easy. It is real easy. I will give you a yardstick that will never fail you. I will give you a yardstick you can put in your pocket and use it 24/7. I will give you a yardstick you can use the rest of your life that the day you die, you know what the yardstick is of your spiritual growth? How well do you love the unlovable today and forgive the unforgivable?

In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, we have a great story there of a man in a church that did a terrible thing. He had formed a case with his own mother-in-law, and the Bible says that now this man would not repent, and so the church—Paul said that they turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. Then when you get to the book of 2 Corinthians, the man gets right. Now, at some point in our time, I do not know when, I am going to bring you through 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians because I do not know of two greater books that teach the ministry almost line by line and give you everything you need to know. We are not quite there yet, but, and I may not—I do not know that I will do it in a church-wide deal, but certainly some of you are at a point that you have—you are going to need this, and when God so directs it, it is going to be time for me to sit down and give you Ministry 101 to show you how the book of 2 Corinthians critiques and lays out everything you and I need to have in ministry and break it down if you are ever going to be effective in ministry. 1 Corinthians chapter 5, he screws it up. 2 Corinthians chapter 12, he does what is right. And here we have a great picture of loving God and forgiving, how forgiveness goes hand in hand.

Do you know what Matthew 6:14-15 says? Most Christians have no idea about this. Here is what it says:

Matthew 6:14-15

> *14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

> *15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Nothing works. You are not willing to forgive somebody else, but you still think you are going to go to God every day and get your sin confessed. I do not think so. See, your basis of your forgiveness for God is based on your forgiveness of others, just like your love for God is based

for others, is based on your love for God. It is the same system. It is just that is so foreign today, so foreign today.

So finally, this guy does what is right, and in 2 Corinthians 2:9, Paul says this:

2 Corinthians 2:9-11

> 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

> 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;

> 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

See that thing? You know what Paul just said? He says, “I forgive you without even being there. I forgive him without even hearing the whole story. Now, how I forgive him in the person of Christ.” There it is. Do you know why Paul could do that? Because he loved the Lord his God with all his heart and all his mind and soul, and it was not anything anybody could do that could take away the joy that Paul had in his life. When nothing—when you are firmly committed to that relationship with God and the Word of God, that nothing offends you, and you are growing in a process in your life, you will come to the point that you love Him so much that nothing anybody can do, even when they do it to you, it is going to take what God has given you. That is how you do it. You have got to do it, and you love that person, you forgive that person, you love her when she is unlovable, you forgive her when she is unforgivable through the person of Christ.

Look at verse 11: “Lest Satan should get advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” Three great principles here, and you better get these down. You better get them down. You better get them down.

8. Verse 9: The proof of your relationship with God is how well you forgive. It is the proof that you have a working relationship with God because there is nothing God will not forgive and forget.
9. The next one is verse 10: If you cannot do it any other way, then you do it in the person of Christ, through the blood of Christ.
10. Then the last thing, if you do not, verse 11: “Lest Satan should get advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” He will get you every time. When the devil gets into details of unforgiveness, it is a mess. He will beat you up one side and down the other, and your ability to be unforgivable will turn to anger, and it will turn to bitterness, and it will destroy you. It will destroy you. It will ruin anything you have, any ability you have to do anything for God.

You cannot come to the place where you barter with God on who you are going to love and who you do not. You cannot. What is this thing? What is this thing about being a Christian mean? What does it mean to love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and your soul? What does it mean when we talk about being Christ-like? It means just that: you do what Christ did. I am

going to tell you something, always two things. Seen it all my life, and I am not saying there are not hard things that you have got to deal with. There will be times in your life that you have to deal with things; it will hurt you so bad that you do not even want to get up in the morning. But you know what? You always do what is right, and you get up. You have got to do whatever you have got to do because you have got to see and understand the big picture. You have got to understand and see it for what it is, and there is never a time that you do not—you do—you and I as a Christian have the option not to do what is right. Now, forget me being a pastor. As a Christian, I never have the option not to forgive and not to forget. As a pastor, I never have the option to be and to not to love somebody no matter what they have done or where they have come from. I am going to tell you something, if you can forgive, you can forget, but if you cannot learn to forgive, you can forget it; you are not going anywhere. You are not going anywhere. It goes right back to your relationship with God of being able to love Him more than anything else with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and all of your strength.

I told you already, forgiving somebody and loving somebody does not mean you have to be best friends, but it means you do what is right. Now, and I get this all the time, and I have had this happen. Somebody is saying, “Well, what do I go—what do I go—what do I go and get right with somebody, and they do not accept it?” Well, first of all, let us get a Bible definition of what doing what is right is because I have found over the years that everybody has got their own definition about everything. Most of God’s people have a bad definition about loving God. They have a bad definition about how God looks at people, and I promise you, most of them have a bad definition of how to get right with God. So let us talk about that for a moment.

Now, in your Bible, you are going to find all kinds of what I call principle models, and one of these days, I am going to take a select group of you who have come to the level that you are really ready to go, and I am going to—I am going to start brainwashing you into the concepts of really dealing with people and giving you all the biblical principles that you have to use at your disposal. You are just not quite there yet, but when you guys get to that point that you are ready, you are still working through some of the basics. I do not want to put too much on you too quick. We are doing great the way we are, and I am handling the bulk of it right now, but there is going to come a time where some of you are going to blossom just like a rose, and you are going to be ready to go. So you are going to get these things, but I am going to tell you something, you do not love God on your own terms. You do not get right with God on your own terms.

You know, in Luke chapter 8, there is a great story. I do not know if you ever read it. If you did read it, you probably never made the analogy I am going to give you, but the story there is about a demon-possessed man out of his mind, and he is living in the tombs, and the picture there is a person who is totally living in the world, and he—he is obviously been away from home, and so you—you can just put it in any 21st-century context, and you know that his family must be embarrassed. His family must be dying. The little kids are probably crying for their daddy every day. The wife now is left with basically running the family, supporting the family. I have seen a thousand scenarios just like this in 30 years of ministry. Well, Jesus comes into the land, and guess what? They meet, and the man gets right with God, and it is a genuine getting right with God. Do you know what the man says? This is your first principle. Do you know what the man

says? Basically, he says, “Jesus, I love You. Thank You for what You did. I want to go with You. I want to serve You. I want to walk with You. I want to give You the rest of my life.” Do you know what Jesus said? He said, “Uh-uh.” He said, “No, here is what I want you to do: you go to your house and you tell them first what great things God has done for you.” You see, the principle is, you cannot get right with God without getting right with the people you hurt. Let me say it again, just so—just—you do not—you cannot get right with God without getting right with the people you hurt. It just does not work. Now, that may be your own definition of it, and you may have had a life of 30, 40 years where you just think, but that is not how it works. Jesus could have just simply said, “Yeah, forget about everybody. Let us go get on the bus, and we are going to evangelize the world.” He said, “No, it is your family you hurt. It is the people in your neighborhood you hurt. It is your kids that you hurt. You want to go with Me? Go make it right with the ones you hurt.” That is how you have got to do it.

Second model: Luke chapter 19. Luke chapter 19, you have the story of old Zacchaeus. Now, you know Zacchaeus, he was a wee, wee, wee little man, a wee little man was he. And Jesus—he hears—he is in the—he is in the deal there, and Zacchaeus comes up there and goes up there in a sycamore tree because he was little of stature. He could not get to Jesus, and he is up in a tree. Jesus walked by and stopped, looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down out of that tree.” He had an encounter with God. See, Zacchaeus walks up, and he says, “Hi, Lord.” And he says, “Hi, Zacchaeus.” He says, “Good to see you today. You are a little bit shorter than I thought you were.” It was good to see anyhow. He says, Zacchaeus says, “My life has been changed.” Do you know what Zacchaeus said? He says, “Lord,” he says, “I am going to make it right with everybody, and I hurt, and he said, if I have taken anything from any man by false accusations, I am going to restore it fourfold.” Now that fourfold principle runs all the way through your Bible, all the way back to David in 2 Samuel, or 1 Samuel. That thing runs all the way back to your Bible. No, it is 2 Samuel, I think. 2 Samuel 12, I think it is. It runs all the way back to your Bible.

Do you know why he said fourfold? I will tell you why: because sometimes when you are, especially true in marriages, sometimes when you hurt your wife or you hurt your husband or you do something really stupid, or sometimes somebody does stupid, stupid to you, a simple, “I am sorry,” just does not cover it. But, oh, guys, are we famous for that? Oh, we are famous for that. We can hurt our wives more than anybody else by one word that we say, and when we hurt that little sweet thing that God gave us, our answer is, when she is quiet in the corner or she is upset because we were so stupid, our big old macho thing is, “Well, I am sorry,” and that is supposed to fix it, right, ladies? Now, right? That is supposed to fix it. Say, “I am sorry.” Hey, there are sometimes when sorry just does not cover it. Do you know what Zacchaeus knew? He knew that there are sometimes you have got to go the extra mile to make sure you do whatever you have got to do. Zacchaeus knew that. He understood that principle. Sometimes it takes more than, “I am sorry,” to fix the hurt and pain, especially in marriages. I will tell you something else, it always takes longer to fix it than it does to break it.

Then I will tell you one last thing: real true repentance in both these cases, both of these cases, and these are the models, true repentance, true getting right with God in both these cases never hesitated in doing what they were supposed to do to make the thing right. Hey, let me tell you, I

have told husbands this before. I have had husbands—it is true of any problem, but it is mostly marriage situation. They had husbands, and you say, “Why do you keep saying husbands?” Because it is husbands that usually screw up. I have had husbands that have come to the place where when they know they have done wrong, they will do anything in the world. I have had them sit in my office and say, “Bob, you tell me what to do, and I will do it. I will do whatever.” I have had them sit in my office before they even had a Bible figured out and get into the Word of God and say, “I want to know what I did wrong,” and try to figure the thing out. I have seen men that wanted to, when they made a mistake, it was instant. They wanted to do whatever they had to do. If I would have said, “Go stand on your head three hours a day, and it will fix your problem after 30 days,” they would have done it. They did not care. They never said, “What? How much? Whoa! I do not know if I can do that.” It was just, “Whatever I have got to do, I will do it.” Then you have others that, “Well, you know, I do not think you understand the whole problem.” Well, they are always alibiing things. It is never their fault. It is always the woman’s fault. It is always somebody else’s fault. It is always this. It is always that. You know what? When true repentance is there, and you want to do what is right, you really do not give a flip whose fault it is. You just want to make the thing right. That is what Christians are supposed to do, and that comes from loving Him with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul.

I am telling you, you—you do not get this one down. The day you got saved, God not only made you a new creature in Christ Jesus, yes, old things were passed away, all things become new. You got the ability to live above the circumstances. You do not have to look back on the way you were raised. You cannot blame it on anybody else. I am telling you, you now have the ability to love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul. And when you start to love God by His terms and not yours, you become like Him, Christ-like, and you do the things He does. And when you do not, you are not fooling anybody but yourself.

Loving God is the hardest thing we will ever have to do in our life, not because He is holy and I am not. It is just because we always want to do it by our standards, and I am no different than that than anybody in here. I am not saying you do not; I am saying we do not. I am the same exact way. I will take the cheap way out every time I can if it was not for that book. And I know people think that I preach the book and hold the line with the book and do not deviate from the book just because that is the way I am. No, no, no. I do it because that is the way I need to be with me because I know me, and I know I will take the easy way out. I will do everything that anybody else if it was not for that book and that book making you love God with all your heart, with all your mind, and all your soul, and that book teaching how to love people like God loves people, and then when you love the unlovable, you can forgive the unforgivable, seeing him from His perspective.

I know it is not immediate. I understand it is a process. I am not expecting anybody to be there today. I am not preaching this message because I think that you—you need to be here. Either when you ones have been around with me for a long time, yeah, you—you, I am talking to you, but everybody else in here, I am saying this: you have got to get it on His terms if you are ever going to be and do what God wants you to do, and you are ever going to fulfill the mission, and

you are ever going to be used the way God wants to use you, you have got to be Christ-like, and that means being like Him.

VIII. Not Taking Things Personally

Everything I told you earlier, the problem we all have is we take things personal. I will tell you how not to take it personal. This is a great lesson for you because we all have that problem. I used to have that problem. I do not take much personal anymore. I mean, I have my weaknesses like everybody else, but for the most part, there just is not a—there just is not a lot of things out there that is going to take what I have with God away from me, no matter what it may be. But I tell you all the time that the key to in ministry is not taking it personal because people are going to do things to you that you take it personal. People are going to say nasty things to you. You know what? Sometimes they are just having a bad day and do not mean it, but your emotions are so fragile because you just hang on to what everybody thinks about you. Okay, you have got to get past that. Sometimes they are having a bad day. Sometimes they just do not like you. Deal with it. It is their deal. It is their deal.

You go to somebody and you say, “I wronged you. I did a terrible thing, and I am sorry.” And that person says, “Well, I do not think I can forgive you.” Fine. You did what you are supposed to do. Now it is on them. The only bottom line is here is if two Christians do what is right, we do not have a problem. You know when you have a problem? When one or the other or both of them will not do what is right. That is where you get problems. Do not take it personal. I taught you what God did. I taught you how God’s—you know how I keep from taking it personal? When you say something to me that hurts me, or you do something to me that hurts me, or—and I do not ever show it, but I deal with all my stuff on the inside because, you know what? If I show it to anybody, I do not even show it to her very well. You know why? He has laid out to our word is tied today to my three amigos that are locked away in the basement, who if they could talk, would repeat a lot of names over the years. That little block when I walk every night, she heard me talk about more things to her than anybody in the world. Okay, but you know, you have got to—you have got to—you have got to deal with it, and you do not take it personal.

Do you know what? We know how I process it. I like that word process. Do you know how—do you know how I blend my behavior? I like that word. I am going to use that a lot. Behavior. You are blending. We have a blender at home. Honey, I am going to blend your behavior when we get home. Do you know how you deal with it? Somebody hurts you. Somebody does something. Somebody snubs you. Somebody—or somebody does something terrible to you. Here is how I deal with it. Here is how I do not take it personally. You see, I remember the fact one day that long before God ever saved me, He sent His Son down to die on the cross, and He hung there in the agony, and He did all of the terrible things that they did to Him, and I know now what God’s Son meant to God. See, I am not hung up on all of the bad definitions we have today. I know God has standards of holiness. I understand why He did the way He did what He did, and I know exactly how it fit in, and I know that before I was ever saved, God, who did not have any reason to, any right to, but because it is just in His character, wanted to love me, but He could not love

me. So, you know what He did? He came down and He shed His own Son's blood so He could love me through that blood.

Now, you know what I did with it? God damn it. Jesus Christ. Jesus H. Christ. God damn it. That is what I did with it. I dragged that name that God loved through the mud for 21 years of my life. I said some of the most ungodly, some of the most despicable. I had some of the most filthy, godless, depraved jokes about God's Son and God's blood and God's death, and I mocked it, and I made fun of it, and I laughed at Him, and my friends laughed at Him, and I yelled it out loud so everybody could know what a big man I was. Yet God, He never took it personal. Never took it personal. It was not a time when He stopped loving me because He saw me through that precious blood. I will tell you something right now, you may do whatever you want to do to me, say whatever you want to say, there will never be a time but by the grace of God that I will ever stop loving you, even when I cannot love you anymore, because I can love you through that blood because I have learned just that my Savior did not take it personal when I did it to Him. Who am I? Who am I to take it personal when you do something to me? I cannot do that. Look at the years I spent in vanity and pride, caring not my Lord was crucified. I cannot. How do I do that? How do I hold against you anything you do to me when I look back and know what I did to Him, and He still loved me unconditionally, and the day I said, "God, I am sorry," He was ready? That is why I love Him, and that is why I had read anything you can do, folks, there is not anything you can say or anything you can do to take that from me because that means more to me than anything in this planet. That means more to me, and that is why I love that book because God showed me that through this book.

I am telling you, you have got to get to the same place in your life where you take it on the chin for Him no matter how hard it hits. You have got to come to the point where you love the unlovable and you forgive the unforgivable. You have got to come to the point where you just love God, and you love Him with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul, and when it gets so hard with tears running down your face that you do not want to do it, you cannot—heart—do not think you can do it, and you cry out, "God, and all my strength," then you do what is right. We do not have the option not to do what is right, and you will never be used of Christ until you become like Christ, and everything else, my friend, will just be a lot of little people running around loving God, doing things for God by their own definitions and not by His. And when that all translates out, then we just bring everything in this world and bring it down and make Christianity the world, and that is why it is hard to find Christians today. It is hard to find them. Christians are drinking just like everybody else. They are living together like everybody else. They are smoking dope, doing drugs like everybody else. And you see, they are doing that because we said that is okay because we want to win you to Christ so bad, we are going to let you just live like the world, and even after you get saved, it does not—not work that way. God has standards of holiness, and you better get it down, and if you are ever going to be the man or the woman God wants you to be, and God is going to ever use you here or someplace else, you are going to have to love Him on His terms, and you are going to have to forgive on His terms, and you are going to have to learn as He loved you when you were unlovable, and He forgave you when you were unforgivable, we have got to do the same thing to other people.

I told you last week, told you last week, what a measuring stick: loving the unlovable, forgiving the unforgivable. Told you last week, every day of your life, you are either going to be more like Him or less like Him. It is just that simple, and you are the only one who determines that. Do you know how you determine that? You determine that by understanding what changed the day you got saved. You are no longer the same person that you were. You do not have to—you do not have to live there anymore, and now you have the ability. I am going to tell you, look at me, look at me, look at me. I am telling you, do not you ever—do not—do not you get to the judgment seat of Christ and point your finger at me and tell me I did not eyeball you and tell you you now have the ability to live like Christ in every aspect of your life. You know what? Start to—start with loving Him on His terms, and then it translates right down the line from there.

Every head bowed, every eye closed. Now, maybe you are here this morning, and you have never trusted Christ as your own personal Savior. I want to say to you that are you—