

I. The Importance of God's System for Learning the Bible

The price of learning is repetition. That is the single most important aspect of the Word of God as far as learning it. Years and years ago, a man by the name of Francis Schaeffer wrote a series of books, I think there were like eight or nine volumes, called Schaeffer's Systematic Theology. I remember as a young man, I did not really know a lot back then, and I thought, just because everybody talked about a guy and how good he was, that he must be good. I remember I bought a set of Schaeffer's Systematic Theology. Back then, this was probably back in the middle 70s, 1975, 1976, somewhere in there. Back then, it cost like \$45. That was a lot of money back then, and it is a lot of money today.

I remember the disappointment. It is like you want to learn the Bible so badly, and somebody tells you, "This guy really got it," so you get all the anticipation. I was never so disappointed in all my life in any set of books that I ever bought as with Schaeffer's Systematic Theology. This guy did not have a clue how to lay out the Bible. I look back on it now, and I think there are so many people out there like that today, whose whole mode is to find another system of laying out the Bible other than God's system. If you are an author of a book, you have one privilege as an author, and that is, you have a right to detail out your work the way you intended it to be done. That is your right as an author, and certainly God has that same privilege and same right as the author of the Word of God, and He did.

You do not read past Genesis 2 before you find out that there is something special about the number seven. Then, over 869 times through the Old Testament alone, you are told there is something special about that number. God sanctified it, meaning He set it apart, and He made it holy. We know, in a sense now, since our studies, we went through the seven baptisms, the seven judgments, all of these concepts. Then we have taken the book of Revelation, which reportedly is the hardest book in the Bible. Many times people like to intimidate you with the Word of God, and they will tell you that because they have some keys to the book. They will want to keep you in the dark and tell you how hard it is, and use it to intimidate you.

Let me tell you something. If you have been saved eight or nine years, and I know many of you in here have just gotten saved in the last three or four years, or less than that, let me just say, and many of you are well on your way ahead of time, because I am working with you one on one, and I am watching you grasp this stuff. But the bottom line is this: if you have been saved seven or eight years, and you do not see these things for what they are, and realize that you have the ability to know the Bible as good as anybody out there, the Word of God and the knowledge of the Bible is not based on how much schooling you have. It is based on where your heart is, and how you want to go after truth.

People go after truth in different ways. I remember one time I went into a 7-Eleven, I do not know if they have them anymore, but it was one of those convenience stores to get gas, and it was one of those things where I went in to pay for it. There was a guy standing in front of me in

line, and he was buying all these lottery things. I do not know much about the lottery tickets, but I guess they have something where you scratch them off and you win something right on the spot. This guy bought five or six of these, and he was kind of a large gentleman, and he had a unique wiggle as he scribbled. I am standing behind him, and he is blocking the whole thing. I want to pay for my gas; I have someplace to go. He is over there, and I never do it the way he did it, and he is throwing that down and grabbing an extra one. I think he spent \$9 and won \$2. What a deal.

I remember when he left, he walked out the door and he said, "Well, I will see you next week." Again, I gave my money for gas, and the guy could see I was a little in a hurry or a little perturbed or whatever, and he just kind of soothed it all over by making a statement. He said, "You know what? That guy comes in here every week. He buys \$10 worth of those scratch-and-sniff things, and he stands here and goes through it, and he is the happiest guy in the world." I got thinking to myself as I walked out, and I will never forget this, I got thinking to myself as I walked out, "That is the stupidest thing in the whole wide world." About that time, God said to me, in my heart, "You know what, Bob, you do the same thing when it comes to My Book. You are scratching there like a chicken looking for a piece of corn." He said, "He has his deal, and you have yours." That is really what it comes down to. You can get out of the Bible everything that God wants you to have, but the real bottom line is, it is your desire of what you want to get.

II. Introduction to the Philadelphia Church Period

Today, we enter into the greatest church period in the history of the church. Before I even preach this message, and it is going to take us maybe two weeks to lay all this out, and even in that, I am going to fail so miserably in conveying all of this to you. My biggest struggle in all of this is when you have an hour and a half to work with on Sunday morning, it is to pick and choose all of what you want to get, and one, to make it make sense, and two, to give you an accurate portrayal of what is going on, but there is so much you have to leave out. You just do not have the time. If there is any period in church history that demands an absolute acute study of it, it is this period of time in church history, as all church history.

I can tell you this, and I know many of you are really coming through the Bible. I know many of you are burning the midnight oil, studying history and trying to get it all up to speed, and my job is to help facilitate that. My job is to help you get it faster, quicker, and find you shortcuts. When I went through church history, it took me ten years of my life to go through it. I want to cut that by a factor of in half for you, maybe more than that, depending on your determination. But it is something that if you are ever going to really be, especially in a day and age that we are living in, if you are ever going to be effectively used for God to do anything, certainly you boys that have got it in your heart that you want to pastor someday, certainly for the guy sitting out there who is going to take my job someday when I am gone, you are going to have to have an understanding of where you have come from in history, and I keep emphasizing that week after week after week, hoping that some of you, many of you, will pick up on it.

Let me give you a quick little shortcut. There are two great pivotal points in history, and all history revolves around these pivotal points, one in the Old Testament, one in the New

Testament, and these pivotal points are basically lost today. You would not find this in Schaeffer's systematic theology. You would not find this in Philip Schaff's book on church history, Newell's book on church history, Wood's book on church history. You just would not find it. It is lost today. You go to a Bible college today, you take a course on church history, you never hear it. You go to a church someplace where they are going to talk about the history, you never see it. You go to UMKC or KU or wherever you go to school, and you go to take a class on history, this is never brought up. Because of that, this is why so many people are off the track.

In the Old Testament, the greatest point in history is simply around 1000 BC. Around 1000 BC, David and then Solomon come to the throne. Obviously, if you know anything about the Bible, this is Israel's highest point. Israel gets called out in Genesis, they go through the formulation there in Genesis and the establishment in Exodus. They get into the land in Joshua, they go under the judges for a while, and then in Samuel they get their first king who is not too hot. Then they get David. David and Solomon bring the nation of Israel to the highest point. It is the apex in Old Testament history. From that point, after the death of Solomon, it all begins to go downhill, and it degrades from there.

Most people do not understand this, that during that period of time, especially under Solomon's reign, most people do not know this. At Solomon's reign, everybody on planet earth knew who God was. When I say planet earth, I mean in the sense of the known world. They were coming from all over planet earth because they heard of the God of Jerusalem and the great King Solomon. There are accounts of that in the Bible, the Queen of Sheba. She is coming from Africa. They are coming from everywhere, and many of the countries are listed, but I am telling you, the greatest pivotal point, and the greatest point in history in the Old Testament is that point when God was known on every place where man set his foot. Everybody knew there was a God. Everybody knew that there was a God of Israel. There was not any question back then where the Muslims fit in. There was not any question in 1000 BC who was God was reigning. There was not any question that if Osiris or Isis or Ra, the great Egyptian God, there was no question where he fit in to God Almighty. Everybody on planet earth knew there was a God. They knew that He was in Jerusalem, and they knew that Solomon was the greatest, wisest man that ever lived. They were coming from all over the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon because that is the closest period in the history of the world to the millennial reign of Christ that is going to take place when Jesus Christ comes back.

You will find that David precedes Solomon. His reign is 40 years, and David wipes out the rest of the enemies. When Solomon came to the throne in 1000 BC, there were no wars for 40 years. It is the greatest period in the Old Testament that foreshadows the coming millennial reign of Christ, and there are no wars. The greatest, wisest man in the history of the planet was sitting on a throne in Jerusalem, and all the world was coming in to hear the wisdom of Solomon and bringing in their tribute to the great God of the nation of Israel. That is absolutely lost today in every aspect of history, including Christian history.

Now, the greatest point in the New Testament church, which is also lost, by the way, is what we are going to talk about today. At this period of time, though Solomon's reign only lasts for 40 years, this period of time runs for about 400 years. This is the church period that we are going to

talk about today, the Philadelphia church period. The Philadelphia church period starts around 1600 AD and will bring us right up to about 1900 AD in our own time frame. Some of your grandparents were alive during this time. There is so much in this time of history that you need to see and understand. As I have said, this is going to be a very failed attempt today to convey this, but I will do the best I can.

III. The Philadelphia Church: A Model of Success

The word Philadelphia means brotherly love. I want to read Revelation 3, starting in verse 7 and coming down through verse 13.

Now, Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You today. We thank You, Lord, so much for all that You have given us and what You have done for us. Lord, I thank You so much for the men and the women in this church. Lord, there is not one of them, Lord, that does not want to do what You want them to do. Lord, I thank You for the ones that have actively got involved in ministry, they got their discipleship and began to go through the books of the Bible as we are going through in our studies and all of the ones that You have raised up. Lord, I know that in these last days that You are going to use us, and this is a great body of men and women as You have pulled together. I am the luckiest man in the world this morning to be able to stand before these dear people and teach them the Word of God. Help them learn. Help me, Father, every day to be a better pastor, to help them be a better teacher, a better communicator. Help me never to be too busy for the least of their issues of life. May I set the example of what needs to be the key to touching people and teaching people the Word of God. Bless these young men that have felt the call to the ministry. Bless these young men that have felt the call to take over ministry in this church that ultimately in time will lead them to the place where You are going to do some great things with them. Lord, I pray for them every day, and I cherish the times that we spend together in the Word of God. I cherish Thursday night. I cherish our times on Sunday morning. Everything that we endeavor to do for Thee, Lord, is a great blessing in my own life, and I know in the lives of many of these people. Help us today, Father. Pull it all together. Help these young men to learn. Help these young ladies to learn, Lord, and help them as they endeavor to work with the women and all the different things. This next year, Lord, as we really turn the dial up and we really start focusing on what needs to be focused on, may You raise them up to the next level. May every year be a new challenge. May we never get stuck in the old rut of just doing for the sake of doing. Lord, if there is no purpose in what we are to do, then let us go do something else. But, Lord, keep that purpose alive and that fire in our hearts driving us. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for His sake we ask it. Amen.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

There is a lot in here, and we are going to take a couple of weeks on this and try to get it all laid out. But there are some things there that you have, today anyhow, this week, you have got to see. You have got to see what makes this church successful. You have got to see what makes this church great. I want to speak just for a moment now, not everybody, obviously, but some of you guys, if you are ever going to find yourself in ministry. Some of you, I have no doubt, you have the ability to be great pastors. As you grow, I already see in your life the ability to get to those levels where you need to. But you need to learn from this because this is where I base my style of ministry in this period of church history. I am not one who, and I am not the brightest guy in the world, but I can see where God's success is. I know enough about God and the Word of God to know that that is where I want to be.

I always enjoy when people ask about the name of our church. I can always tell where they are at in the Bible by how they deal with the name of our church. The name of our church is Old Path Baptist Church, and it is found in Jeremiah 6:16. In that chapter, there was a design behind calling it that. You find all kinds of churches with all kinds of names, but I wanted a biblical name that made a statement. A statement right out of the box. A statement that we make and a statement that somebody makes when they say, "Old Path Baptist Church, that is kind of a weird name for a church, is not it?" I said, "Well, you are probably kind of a weird Christian for our church, but that is okay. Go on. What were you saying?"

The nation of Israel had fallen into terrible times, and they were told in Jeremiah 6 that they were to look for the old paths. The old path was going to lead them back to God and the Word of God. He tells them in that passage that the old paths were the right way. He said that those old paths would lead to rest for your souls. If there is any time in the world where God's people and the world need rest for their souls, it is the day and age that we live in. It will not come because of all the hyper-stuff that churches put out. It will not come because at Christmastime you build a 1900-foot living Christmas tree and decorate it with people. It will not come because you put on a nativity scene. It will not come because you bring in some great music group. It will not come because of that. No, it is going to come because you are going to get back to the basics like Israel needed to get back to the basics. You are going to get back on the old path. The old path is going

to bring you back to the Word of God. The old path for me, my friend, and for you, whether you know it or not, I know it, maybe you do not, but the old path will lead me right back to the Philadelphia Church Age. That is where the old path leads. You are going to find that our ministry is patterned after this period of time. My style of preaching, my style of ministry, my perspective on dealing with things, the training in the Word of God, it all goes back. If there is anything I have studied extensively, it is this period of time because once I saw that this period of time was the key, then I knew that that is what I needed to do.

I will tell you something else about this church. We are going to talk about a number of things this morning, but when I got reading this for the very first time, I caught this first time I read it. First time I read it, I knew this church was different because right out of the shoot, I saw that this was the only church that God did not correct. Every other church, He had something that they had to fix, something that they were doing that was wrong, something that was not right. When I came to this church, He did not say anything about this church that they needed to fix. This church is as close to what it can humanly be on earth. This church in God's mind is as close to what God expected a church to be. When I saw that, I said to myself, "When I build a church, it is going to be built on the model in the Bible that is as close to what God wanted it to be." It is the only church out of the seven that is told not to repent.

Then I saw this in Revelation 3:8. I was reading this down there and I saw where it said, "I have set before thee an open door." I know enough about the Bible to know that from 2 Corinthians 2:12, places like 1 Corinthians 16:9, and Colossians 4:3, that open doors in the Bible or doors in the Bible represent opportunities. I know that when God talks about setting before an open door, that that is talking about opportunities. I saw this church, in fact, in history. This church is called the church of the open door. This church had set before them an open opportunity. You have got to remember where the first point in history in the Old Testament under Solomon and David, where the whole world knew about God and understood God and the whole concept, during this period of time, during this period of time from 1600 to 1900, I know this is hard to believe, but during this period of time, there is hardly anybody on planet earth that does not know about God and His plan of salvation. This is the period of time in history, these 400 years, where over three quarters of the world population is born again. This rivals the time in the Old Testament. Just like nobody understands about the Old Testament under Solomon and David, you could not find anybody in this city today probably, maybe one or two, but it would be a very short list, who understand that this period of time was the greatest period of time in church history. It was a time that is unparalleled in the history of the world, as far as the gospel of Jesus Christ going to the ends of the earth, unparalleled anyway in history. So when the Bible talks about that God had set before them an open door, it meant that they had an opportunity.

Most churches fail to see this. I learned a long time ago that in the ministry, guys, you need to learn this. You cannot make things happen. If things do not happen because God makes them happen, do not make them happen. Trying to make something happen in the church that is not God's design and God's timing will always be a disaster. You know what we have got in 99.999% of the churches in Kansas City? We have got churches that because they have lost the Bible, they have lost God's Spirit. So what they have done now is manufactured ministry to the tune that

they are churning it out, giving the appearance that it is going on when actually God has nothing to do with it. You never want to find yourself in that situation. Never. You always want to be behind God, not ahead of God. You ought to want to be following God's lead. You always want to watch what He is doing, be in touch with what He is doing, and then build what you are doing on the wake of what God has already done. That is vital. God will open the opportunities. God will give you the opportunities. The key of recognizing it is your intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit of God.

That is another problem we have today. Most Christians today do not have an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. They started maybe in their life. They started maybe getting into the Bible. Then who knows what took its place. They never got finished with really growing. They never really built the relationship with God. Therefore they are saved. They are on their way to heaven. But they are pretty much left to their own. Let us face it. We all like to take charge and do our own thing. I do not care how submissive we all are to God. The bottom line is we still got an old sin nature. That old flesh always wants to raise up and take charge. That is something you cannot do when it comes to the ministry. You have to follow His leading. He will open up the doors based on what you do with His Word. That is the key. God will give you plenty of opportunities.

I hear all the time today how hard it is to build a church. I hear it all the time today. I mean I hear it everywhere I go. Every guy I talk to. Everybody is using the excuse because their church is not growing because of the indifference of the world today. I got news for you. The world is no more indifferent now than it was back then. The reason why churches are not growing is not because the world is indifferent. It is because the people in the churches are indifferent. Now who is the cause of that? Is that the people in the church? No. That is the guy who is in charge. I will tell you another great lesson, boys. Everything rises and falls on leadership. You have to stand on that pulpit and keep your people accountable. Accountability is the greatest factor in the Philadelphia church age. The men that were taking the Word of God and preaching it and doing what they were doing with it were absolutely preaching an accountability factor of responsibility to the Word of God.

The next thing in Revelation 3:7 I saw was the fact that this church found the key of David. The key of David goes with the door. Keys and doors go together. This church found the key of David, and it was the key of David that opened up the door of opportunities that made this church an open door. The next church we are going to study, which is the last one, which is the one we are living in, is the great alternative to this, and it is called the church of the closed door. We will get into that later. But this church had a key. Young men, if you are ever going to build a ministry and you are going to reach whatever culture you are in, you have got to get that key right there. That key right there you have got to have. It is more important than the key to your car, your home, whatever. It is the most important key any Christian will ever have because the success of you as a Christian or your ministry depends on you finding this key. This key opens up doors. If you do not open the door, you are not going anywhere, and then you will fabricate it to make it look like it is God doing it.

IV. The Key of David: Loving God's Word

This key is very easy in the Bible, as most of the Bible is. This key is found in the book of Psalms. You are going to find that the greatest, probably, example in the Old Testament of what your life and my life should be, not only with God and the Word of God, is the man David. The Bible says in the book of Acts, after his life was all over, that he was a man after God's own heart. Well, I know what God's heart is. God's heart is the Word of God. So where would I go in the Bible to find David's heart lined up with God's heart? Well, I would go to the heart of the Bible. The heart of the Bible is Psalms 119. Psalms 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. It was written as the longest chapter in the Bible, so you would ask yourself, "Hmm, I wonder why this is the longest chapter in the Bible?" Then when you started to look at why it was the longest chapter in the Bible, you would find there are 176 verses to it. You would also say, "Hmm, every one of these 176 verses tells me another aspect of what the Word of God will do for me." It is the only chapter in the Bible where every verse in it points you to another aspect of the Word of God.

The key of David is Psalms 119 as far as the text, but Psalms 119 alone will not give you the key. It is what Psalms 119 teaches you from it. I mean, I know every pastor in this world probably knows Psalms 119. That does not mean he has the key. The key of David was this, and the key for you and for me is this. The key to getting the opportunities is obviously the Bible, but the key to learning the Bible is not how much you study it. The key to learning the Bible is not how much you read it. The key to learning the Bible, my friend, is how much you love it. That is the key. If there is anything in your life you love more than the Word of God as a child of God today, you have got some work to do in your life. I am not criticizing you. I know that you are all in different areas. Sometimes it takes a while to work through it. That is not a criticism. That is just a statement. The goal of your life ought to be to get to the place in your life where you never, never, never, never love anything more than the Word of God. That is not the easiest thing in the world to do. But you have got to see that book as everything in your life. You have got to recognize that everything in your life that is good and you have of God and everything that is going to control your life, that book, it is an open-ended checkbook. Absolutely incredible. The key of David is the fact that David was a man after God's own heart because he had a word that he loved.

I will tell you something else. David is an incredible study. Have you ever noticed David starts out as a shepherd boy? He starts out as a shepherd boy, but he winds up as a king. You take that concept of David's life and you have got something there for you and for me. When he was a little shepherd boy, that is when he wrote most of the Psalms. You know what he did? He sat out there all by himself watching those sheep on those lonely nights. Nothing to do. He had such a relationship with God and the Word of God that he began to make up songs of the love of God in his heart with the Word of God that he knew. They come down to us today as the Psalms. He did not write all of the Psalms, but he wrote many of the Psalms. What you have there is a record of David's heart loving God and the Word of God and through the joy in his heart of his fellowship with God, taking the Word of God and then putting it to music. Who was he singing it to? This is the key. The sheep? He is singing it to God. That is the greatest aspect, and I do not know if you

can even grasp that today. The greatest aspect of getting to the point in your life where you and God have such a relationship together that everybody else is just on the outside looking in. Everything you have in your life runs through that relationship.

That is the biggest problem we all face. It is things in opposition to the Word of God. Some of you kids are single. Someday you are going to get married, and you are going to find somebody that... What is going to happen is this. If you do not have this something settled first, you are going to have something always coming in competition with the Word of God. You are going to have to have judged this person by what the Word of God says. You are going to have to always have a choice. You are going to have to choose. But you see, if you just put the Word of God first and do not ever allow the choices to come up, because if you run it through the Book, there is never a choice. Do you see what I am saying? It is only a choice when you have the Book over here and what I want to do over here. If you have such a relationship with God that everything runs through the Book, then there is never a choice you have got to make. That is the... if you can just grasp... and I do not know if you can even get it today... if you can just grasp that concept and realize that your relationship with God, the key of David that this church had, was the fact that the Book was everything in David's life, and there was never a choice for David, because everything ran through the Book. When you do not run it through the Book, then you have got a choice. When you run it through the Word of God, there is no choice to it, because the first one you are bouncing it off to is the one you ought to be talking to all the time and singing those things to, talking those things to.

Let me tell you something, boys. The greatest messages you will ever preach are not the messages you will preach down at the mission. They are not the messages you will preach in this pulpit. The greatest messages you will ever preach are the ones that you and God, you just preach to Him. Those are the greatest. I do not know why we think preaching before a bunch of people takes precedence over preaching before God Almighty in a private audience. I have never understood that. But you see, it has to start with your love for that Book. When you love that Book, you are not faced with choices in life. It is all through the Book, and it takes care of itself. It makes life a lot less complicated. So we find that this door that this church had was opened by a key. The key was this church's love affair with a Book, the Word of God.

Now, we can take that same concept as a church, and you can apply it into any individual's heart and life you want to. The same success for the church will be the same success that you and I have, because it all comes back to the Word of God and loving it more than anything else in this whole wide world. That is a process. It takes time to get there. But do not let it go on forever. There ought to be a daily time in your life. I see so many people that get on fire for God, they start going, and they cool off for a while, and then everything comes over the wall again, and they are just pulled right back out of it. There is never a time that the Book can be anything but a priority in your life.

Please do not take this wrong, and I even hesitate to say this, because I know the moment I do, I am either going to make somebody mad or make somebody feel bad, and that is not my... Well, I do not care about making you mad. I do not want to make you feel bad. Making you mad is good. I know it happens, and sure as I say this, God is going to call me accountable, and I am

going to do the same thing. That is okay with me, too. I know these things happen. I know they happen. But I just do not understand. All my life, I have been around people that would misplace their Bibles. Now, I know it happens. I am not talking about you last night, because... See, this is my whole thing, but see, if you would not... It is not you. I am not talking about you. I mean, that was a legitimate thing last night. You know, and I slapped you and knocked you on the ground, and you told me why, and made you give me 20 push-ups, and you explained it. We were done. That was legitimate. I understand that.

Maybe it is just me, and I will take that. If you want to just say it is just you, that is fine. If it is my quirk, that is fine. I do not go to bed until I look five or six times where it is at. I do not like to leave the house and leave it there, say the house may burn down, but I do not want to take it in my car because somebody might steal it out of my car. I will never put it in my luggage when I fly. The day they will not let you take a big Bible in a big bag, I am not flying. I am not putting my Bible there in some gorilla in there and lose my Bible. I do not understand it. When I go to bed, the last thing I do is make sure I did not leave it somewhere where one of the dogs can get in a happy mood and chew it. I do not go anywhere that I do not look, always where it is at. It is not out of my mind for five minutes, wherever I am at. I am thinking, "Where is my Bible? Where is it at? Where is that?" I never say anything, but I am sometimes over there on Thursday Night Bible study. I will leave my Bible there, and I will be talking to somebody, and I will look over, and a dear, sweet-meaning person will come over, and they will just... At that particular point, I can just see them. "Oh, I like that page. I think I will take that home." It is like my wife. Any book she gets, any book she gets, especially her Bible, any book she gets, if I even get close to it, the words out her mouth, "Do not wrinkle the pages."

Now, I understand. But I am telling you, that Bible has to become your number one possession. I say that tongue-in-cheek because I know there are stupid times. I lost one time, and I learned this the hard way. We were staying out all the way at Worlds of Fun years ago with a couple kids whose parents were gone somewhere, and they had a big nice house over there. We stayed with them. We all went to church, remember? We drove their station wagon. We were in a hurry in the morning, and I put my Bible in a briefcase. I have always double-bagged my Bible. I mean, I put it in a Bible case. It will always be in a hard case bag or some bag that is bulletproof, fireproof, radiation-proof. I had it in a big briefcase. So we are in a hurry, and we are putting this stuff in, and I laid the Bible right on the back of the tailgate of the station wagon. Now we are getting the kids in the car, and next thing I know, we are tooling down the freeway. You all have heard horror stories. Some of you have lost your Bible. I tell you a common thing, and this is... When you get in your car, you put it on top of the car, you put your stuff in, and then you get in the car, and you drive off. How many times have I heard that? Now, I can sympathize with that.

But I will tell you. We are driving down I-70 from Worlds of Fun all the way to church, and honestly, when I got out of that car, and we got the kids out, immediately I saw the gate was down. I cannot tell you the panic that came into my heart. I went back, and honestly, this is the truth. I went back there, and that briefcase was just like this on the back of that bumper. The Bible says God takes care of the fools and drunkards. I do not drink. That is at least one option. But God knew my heart about that Book. You can laugh at me all you want, make fun of me all

you want. You know what I think? I believe there were two tired angels, brother, that were running behind that car, holding that thing on the back of that tailgate. Now, you can do whatever you want to do. I do not care. My Bible, I am telling you, I have never from that point, never. Never. Never. A guy asked me one time, "Could I take your Bible home and look at it overnight and just kind of...?" I said, "Sure. Can I have your four-year-old kid in case you do not bring it back? I mean, I will sell him at a slave labor. I do not care." When you get the key, you never want to lose it, because it opens up every opportunity in life. But you have got to get there. You have got to get there.

Then he says down there in Revelation 3:8 and 10. Here is the key. Here is the success of this church. He says, they have kept My Word. Look at Revelation 3:8, at the end of the verse: "thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Look at Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience." This church kept the Book that God gave.

V. The Reformation and the Rise of Protestantism

Now, in history, getting it all in perspective, in history, this would be... and we have come up through this now. We have got two clear lines now. One out of Antioch, one out of Alexandria and Rome. In history, this would simply be the pure text versus the corrupt text. This would be the pure text out of Antioch that we have been talking about, versus the corrupt text out of Alexandria, Egypt and Rome. The text out of Antioch came up, started in the book of Acts and came up through the Bible. We talked about it. In the early part, about 100, 120, 150 AD, it was translated into the Old Syriac. The Old Syriac is from Syria, Antioch of Syria. So it is in Old Syriac. That was a Bible that was passed around, and then a little bit later on, about 200 or so, it was translated into the Old Latin. The Old Latin Bible was the Bible of the Waldensians and the Albigensians that brought them through the church age.

We talked about the Morning Star of the Reformation, Wycliffe, about 1390 or so, and he gave the first English translation. He translated it off the Old Latin and the Old Syriac. Then we have in 1532, Tyndale. Then we have 1537, Coverdale. 1537, Matthew Henry. 1539, Coverdale is great. 1560, the Geneva Bible. When the Pilgrims came over in 1603, they had a Geneva Bible. Finally, in 1568, it was the Bishops' Bible. Then in 1603, they started to work on the 1611, and in 1611 it was finished, and that is the final Bible out of that concept. So you see it all coming together. When the start of this period of time in history, the greatest period of time started, it started at the exact same time the finished Word of God in English was made available to man. Literally speaking, lowest common denominator, this Philadelphia Church period is really nothing more than the text out of Antioch. Acts 11, where they are first called Christians, being brought to the point where it is now into an English language, which is going to be the language of the world, and it literally goes around the world three or four times from 1600 to 1900, a time when three quarters of the world is won to a saving knowledge of Christ.

When the Laodicean church comes in, watch the difference. Church of the open door, church of the closed door. When the church of the open door is in power, three quarters of the world is saved. When the church of the closed door comes in the building, three quarters of the world goes communist. See how it works? It is real simple. It is real simple. As I said, we are going to

have to take a couple of weeks to deal with this, but I want you to get a good grasp of it. If there is anything that demands an in-depth study in your life, brother, it is this. Well, it is church history in general, but certainly this.

Now, I have given you the one single reason why the success of this church and shows you how that it is the pattern of my own personal life and the ministry of this church. Now I want to show you some other things historically that you need to see. That brings about this time. Then I want to come back and, at least this week, I want to put it all into perspective for you, so at least you get this part of it.

The thing behind the scenes, so to speak, in history, and there is a lot of misinformation on this, and this is greatly misunderstood, but if you were going to study history and you are going to go through the history of the church and put all this stuff together and you read some books, they would tell you that the thing that brought about this church was something in time called the Reformation. Let me explain the Reformation. The word Reformation comes from the word reform. What happened is that there was a Roman Catholic priest by the name of Martin Luther, and Martin Luther, around 1500, 1520, was a Roman Catholic priest. Martin Luther began to see the corruption that was taking place in Rome. He was greatly disillusioned. Martin Luther tried everything in his heart that he knew. You see, you have got to understand, even though the Roman Catholic Church was greatly corrupted, there were still a lot of people in it who really wanted to love God. Martin Luther was one of them. Martin Luther tried everything in the Roman Catholic Church to try to find peace with God, because he was not saved. When the church told him to do this, he did this, never found any peace. When the church told him to do this, he did this, never found any peace. He said later on that he would crawl up 200 stairs of the cathedrals on his knees, because his knees were bloody because they told him that that is the way you find peace with God through hurting yourself or some kind of penance, so he would try to do that, never found any peace.

One night, Martin Luther got reading the Bible, wrong thing to do. Got reading over in the book of Romans, second wrong thing to do. He read a great verse that simply says, "The just shall live by faith." The Holy Spirit of God that day and that night took Martin Luther and showed him that a man is saved by faith in Jesus, driving his death on the cross. That night, Martin Luther bowed his head and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to come into his heart and save him, and got from that what he never got from all the things the church told him to do. See, that is why I keep telling you, there is no church in this world that can answer your problems or fill you up. It has to be God Himself. Martin Luther that night found, and of course, now that he is saved, oh, the party just begins, because now nothing, before he was not happy with the Roman Catholic Church, now he is really unhappy. He just gets promoted and gets to be a master of theology at Wittenberg Church in Germany. Right when he took that, he came up with 95 articles against the Roman Catholic Church. It was called his 95 Theses, thesis being a study. It was 95 things he taught that they said that the Roman Catholic Church was not teaching that was in the Bible. He went up to Wittenberg Church and he nailed that 95 Theses to the door. I have stood in front of that door in Wittenberg, Germany, the same exact door where he nailed that 95 Theses in 1520. He nailed that thing to the wall, and when that happened, the Reformation began.

Luther began to write some works. Luther began to put out some publications about how the just shall live by faith. Luther's greatest asset was his preaching, not his theology. But he begins to spawn a movement that gets picked up all through Europe. Over in Switzerland, a guy by the name of Ulrich Zwingli, 1525, another Roman Catholic priest who is disillusioned, who really wants to love God but finds the emptiness of the Roman Catholic Church. He gets saved. He starts reading Luther's material. Then he starts a Reformation in Switzerland. Then we have a guy by the name of John Calvin, about 1530. He starts the Swiss Reformation in France by Luther's writings, then later in Scotland, and then back into Switzerland. We have a guy by the name of John Knox. John Knox's village is named because of this guy. John Knox is the start of the Presbyterian Church. John Knox was an incredible guy. John Knox is won to Christ. John Knox, again, John Knox is won to Christ. He is a Roman Catholic priest. He is won to Christ on the street by a street preacher. He comes to the point where once he gets saved, he gets into Luther's material, and it just spawns a Reformation again and adds fuel to the fire. His Reformation goes all the way to England, to Scotland, and it is incredible. He is a powerful preacher. He is the only man in history that I know of that stood before Queen Mary, Mary, Queen of Scots, who was called Bloody Mary. Maybe you had a drink to her one night. And preached to her hell, fire, and damnation in her court and lived to tell about it. It is said of him that John Knox feared the face of no man, incredible individual.

He had during this period of time another Roman Catholic priest called Erasmus of Rotterdam, Rotterdam being in Holland. Erasmus is a Roman Catholic priest that again, he sees the corruption of the Roman Catholic Bible. You know what he does? He takes the Old Latin and the Old Syriac, and he takes Wycliffe's Bible, and he translates a new Greek text, which in time became what we know as the Textus Receptus. It becomes the foundation for your King James Bible as the text of Erasmus. All this stuff now, before we get to the background, which led to the Reformation, which came to break the grasp what the Roman Catholic Church had on the world.

For those of you that are keeping account, we have talked about the Greek Orthodox Church where they split about 800. Now we got out of this Reformation, we have some more churches. This is where you need to know where these churches come from. We have now the Lutheran Church. It starts with Martin Luther. We have the Presbyterian Church. It starts with Calvin and Zwingli and John Knox. We already have the Greek Orthodox Church, and then we have another little fiasco that takes place here. In the 1500s, England is Catholic, and she is run by the Pope under the thing with Charlemagne we talked about a couple of weeks ago. Clement VII is the Pope at that particular time, and we have got the reign of Henry VIII. Henry VIII, of notable fame down through history, Henry VIII is married to Catherine of Spain. He has fallen out of love with Catherine of Spain, and his new love is a woman named Anne Boleyn. So Henry VIII calls the Pope up on the hotline and the red phone, and he says, "Your Majesty, Your Highness, Your Vicar of God, My Führer, you have got to help me here. I do not love Catherine of Spain anymore. I have given my heart to Anne. Anne and me, we just click. Catherine, you know what? But here is the problem. You are the only one who can give a divorce. If you do not give a divorce, I cannot get a divorce. Now, look, pal, how many times have I scratched your back? Remember that thing over here where you helped me out? I need some help. Will you give me a divorce that I can marry my love, Anne?"

The Pope thinks about it a little bit, and he says, "Well, you know what, Henry? I will tell you. Here is the problem. You are married to Catherine of Spain. Her father is Charles V of Spain, who is now the reigning king in Spain. Charles V is just really whapping up on those Waldensians down there in the Inquisition." See, back then, they married back and forth because they wanted to make alliances, so the king of England married the queen of Spain or his daughter, and that was supposed to make, that was supposed to take the war from the two countries and put it in the marriage. I guess, I do not know. It is a tradition that still goes on today. Anyhow. So, what you have here, see, is, and the Pope says, Clement says, "I cannot do that. I just cannot. I mean, Charles is, he is my buddy, and he is just killing all these Bible believers, and I cannot do that. If I do that, he will take his foot off the pedal, and I will have all these Waldensians running all over the world." He cannot do that.

Well, Henry VIII, he is down in the dumps. He is walking around the castle, bumping into things, not eating. Thomas Cromwell is his prime minister. Thomas Cromwell comes over, and he says, he says to Henry, "King? What is the matter?" He is sitting there, got that far away look in his eye, hating Catherine, dreaming of Anne. He says, "Well," he says, "you know," he told the whole story, and Thomas Cromwell says, "What are you talking about? You are the king. You are letting that pizza pie guy over there tell you what to do from Italy. You are the king of England. You can do what you want to do." Henry started saying, "Yeah, I am. I am the king. It is nice to be the king. I am the king. Yeah, I am the king." So he gets on the phone to the Pope, and he says, "Hey, Clement, I will tell you what, pal. I do not need your, I do not need your indulgence in a divorce. You know what, we are not Catholic anymore. We are starting our own church." Pope says, "Wait, wait, wait, wait. We are starting our own church. Who is going to be the head of your church?" "I am. I am the king of England. I am going to be the head of the church." He said, "Well, what are you going to call it?" He says, "Hey, Thomas, what are we going to call it?" Thomas said, "Call it the King's Church of England." "Yeah, we are going to call it the Church of England. I am going to be the head of this church. You know the first thing I am going to do? Give myself a divorce." Click.

Now, how would you like to be a member of a church that started that way? Is not that a little flavorful from Acts 11 where they were first called Christians? You go to Acts 11 where they were first called Christians, they were teaching the Bible, preaching the Bible, living the Bible, loving the Bible, training people in the Bible. You go to Henry VIII and his church starts because he wants a divorce, he wants to marry somebody else. Not the best grounds to start a church on. Now, we have the Presbyterians, we have the Lutherans, and we have the Greek Orthodox. Now we have the Church of England. The Church of England is also called the Anglican Church. It is also called the Episcopalian Church. Then we get some split off from these, you see.

These churches are called Protestant churches. You need to know that. They are called Protestant churches because they protested Rome and then broke from Rome in the Reformation. Now, you need to know that simply for one reason. You are going to find somebody one time who is going to say, "Well, are you a Catholic or what are you?" You are going to say, "No, I am a Baptist." They are going to say, "Oh, you are a Protestant." No, a Baptist is not a Protestant. Never was, never shall be. The Baptist Church did not come out of the Roman Catholic Church in the

Reformation. The Baptists and the forerunners of the Baptists, the Waldensians and the Albigensians, the Huguenots, and you know the list, it goes way back before the Reformation ever started. This is some of the misinformation that is out there. You are not a Protestant.

I never forget when I went in the army, and they make your dog tags. All my dog tags. I was not even living for God then. I just knew I was a Baptist. I was not a good Baptist, but I was a Baptist. I did not know I was not a Protestant. When we go through there, and the guy says, "What is your name?" I said, "Alexander Robert D." Gave me my number. He said, "What is your religion?" I said, "Baptist." He said, "Nah, Protestant or Catholic." I said, "Neither, I am a Baptist." He said, "Okay," typed in B-A-P-T, Baptist. Blood type, B negative, boom. My dog tags say, "I am a Baptist." Because if somebody shot me, and they found my name, I want to know I am a Baptist. I am a Baptist. I am not a Protestant. I never protested anything out of the Reformation in my life. Nor was anybody in my heritage. I am not a protester. I am not a Protestant. I am a Baptist. My line goes back to the old paths that go all the way back to Antioch. That is where you are at. I am sure you cannot get as excited as I am about it, but that is where you come from. That is your problem, not mine. I am a Baptist.

My old Mal Sabaka, my old father in the Lord, he was something else. They put him in a hospital one time, and the lady came in to take all the spiritual information. He was a character. He still is. I remember one time in the hospital, he would do all kinds of stuff. You know those little plastic things? You have to figure, urine specimen. Well, he put his orange juice in his. The nurse came in and said, "Mr. Sabaka, did you give me your specimen this morning?" He says, "Yeah, but it is a little cloudy. Let me run through one more time." Is not that true, Mark? That is true. I mean, he is something else. I am just telling you, man, you can believe it or not, but he did. That is why I am the way I am. It is not my fault. He goes in there, and this little fruity guy comes in, and he is getting the information, and he says, "Are you a...?" And he says, "I am a Baptist." He said, "Well, we do not have a, we do not have a slot for Baptist." He said, "Are you a Catholic or are you a Protestant?" He said, "Okay, put down, I am a Bible-believing Christian." He said, "Oh, we do not have a slot that big here." The point is, I am a Baptist. I have a heritage. Now you do not know yours, that is fine. I know mine, okay.

VI. Factors Driving the Reformation

So we see that the Reformation was the beginning. Then another issue was the failure of the Crusades. This brought about unrest. The Crusades, we talked about it last week, when they came back, they began to realize they had been lied to. The Roman Catholic Church had told them for 1000 years that they had the greatest life on planet earth. They were living in garbage. You know, the old feudal system, with the kings and everybody else on the bottom. They went to the Crusades, they saw silk, they saw tapestry, they saw that there were greater worlds and civilizations out there, and they came back disillusioned. Not to mention the fact that the Pope said God was going to open up all these oceans and move all these mountains and none of that happened. Okay, so they came back and they are tired of 1000 years. So this is a crack in the dam that the water is coming through.

The corruption of Rome is another one. Many of the reformers, as I already told you, were Roman Catholic priests. They wanted to have a real relationship with God. But because of Rome and the corruption and the emptiness that Rome leads to, they found nothing. When they got saved, the lights came on. I do not have time this morning to go through the unspeakable corruption that is going on in the church. Dante, Dante the great atheist, writer during this period of time who wrote Dante's Inferno, he called the Vatican a sewer of corruption. In fact, he said that every pope and every archbishop and every cardinal had to be ascribed to the lowest parts of hell. He was an unsaved man.

But without a doubt, I have got to tell you, without a doubt, this is where the great lessons are. Without a doubt, the number one single event that brought about the end of Rome's rule, for a while anyhow, was without a doubt the street preaching and the personal witness of the millions and millions and millions and millions of people. Now, boys, if you are ever going to preach and you are ever going to build a church, learn this truth right here. The thing that made this church the open door was nothing more than a common man with a common Bible that he had fallen in love with. I am telling you, this is why the devil does not want you to have a Bible this morning. The greatest threat, the greatest threat to the devil and what he is doing will be the common man with a common Bible. He has to take that Bible and not let that man understand the truth of God so somebody can understand it for him. When that happens, you are thrown back into the dark ages, and that is why I said at the beginning of this study, we are back in the dark ages again today. You were told that you cannot figure it out for yourself. When a Roman Catholic church told them that they could not figure it out because they were idiots and Rome had the secrets, they tell you today a watered-down version, "You have got to know Greek and Hebrew, and if you do not, you cannot know it, but I do, so I will tell you what it is." There is no difference between the two. There is no difference whatsoever. This whole thing about the Word of God today is about one issue. It is about authority and trying to destroy God's Word as authoritative.

VII. The Devil's Strategic Error and the Modern Church's Challenge

Now, I want to tell you a lesson I learned in 1970. I learned this lesson as an unsaved man when I was in the Army in 1970. I was in the Army stationed at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, in 1970. We had what we commonly call the Kent State Massacre. How many remember the Kent State Massacre? My goodness. Kent State was a little college town in Ohio, and I was stationed at Fort Devens, and what happened was that the war was very unpopular, the war in Vietnam, and the radical movements on the college campuses were burning down buildings, burning down whole campuses, just absolutely going crazy. It was spreading across this country. I remember going home, flying home, with my uniform on, being spit on. People would take dog manure and throw it at you in a little plastic bag. They hated the military, and they hated the war.

I will never forget, when it happened, the, and this was back in the hippie, but now I know most of you do not know what hippies are. They are like Tyrannosaurus Rexes, not around today. But the hippies were a peace movement. The hippies were anti-establishment. By the way, the hippies are in your government's power today. They were hippies in my day. They are in charge

of the country today. They just do not call them hippies anymore. They had the big bell bottoms with the flowers on. They all smoked dope, and it was all free love, and it was all the things. It was all that stuff, back in the 60s and the 70s, and the beads, and all the things, and listen to all the music, "Strawberry Fields Forever," "Yellow Submarine," all drug stuff. LSD was big, and marijuana was big. I will never forget, they ringed our fort in Fort Devens. I walked down to the gate, to see what was going on, got a little hill there next to the statue of George Patton, and I could see that they had all these guys lined up in a big circle with M14s with bayonets fixed, and they thought they were going to storm the gate. It was incredible. Now, it was called the Great Kent State Massacre. We never called it that in the military. We simply called it "National Guard 5, Kent State Nothing." That is what we called it.

I will never forget, this whole country was upset over that, and I learned a great lesson out of that. I learned a great lesson out of that. I watched those guys burn down buildings, overturn cars. I watched those people tear down the establishment society, because that is what they were against. It was anti-authority. You know what I learned out of that? This is a great lesson. I have never forgot this lesson, and it has stayed true to me since 1970, even though at that time I did not understand what God was showing me. You know what I learned from that? I learned that anybody that is against authority. I watched those guys burn down everything, but I never watched them build anything. The great lesson I learned out of that, that people that are against authority never build anything, they just want to always tear it down. Brother, I have carried that with me for 35 years. Those people never built a thing. They were against any kind of civil authority, and all they want to do was tear it down and destroy it, but they never built nothing. You take a man today that wants to destroy the authority, the Word of God in your life, he will tear it down, but you know what? They cannot build anything. That is why they are not building churches. God teaches you that long before you ever come to Christ, because God knows someday you are, and He lets you learn those lessons. I am not kidding you, man. It was against an authority.

I will tell you, you know what the biggest mistake the devil made? The devil does not make many mistakes. I will tell you this. One of the greatest things you want to do in the Bible, you want to have a little study in the Bible, go through the Bible and find out where the devil made mistakes. You see, the Bible says he is the greatest, wisest being that ever was, but he does not know the Bible like God does. Therefore, because of that, if you study the Scriptures carefully, you will find where it... Now, I have got to tell you this. He never makes the same mistake twice. I will give him that. But he does not know everything in the Bible. There are some things that God has hid from him. A great study in the Bible is to find out the things that are hid. I am up to about six or seven, and there are probably some more, but I have got the major ones. I saw that a while back, and I thought to myself, "Wow, that answers a lot of things to me." Because I have always been under the impression for years and years that the devil knew everything like God did. Well, now I know that he does not. He knows it right under the Godhead, but there are some things in that Book that God did not let him see. Because he did not see it, the devil makes the mistakes, and then God skirts out through the thing and just says, "Watch this." It is an incredible study in the Scriptures.

So I am going to tell you a mistake that the devil made here. He never made it twice, but this is the single number thing why the Reformation took place. This is it. The bottom line is this. The biggest mistake the devil made in his error was that he thought he could wipe out God's people and kill them with persecution, torture, murder, burning at the stake, terrorism, and intimidation. He actually thought that if he could just butcher them, murder them, kill them, wipe them out, that he could end Christianity. His mistake was that is the worst thing he could have done because when you do that to Christianity, it only makes it stronger.

The great churches in the 20th century, ladies and gentlemen, were not in America. Now, I know you believe that. Because you listen to Jerry Falwell, and you see this guy on TV and that guy on TV, and you see these big crowds, and you see that Joel Osteen is now on TV and all the other guys on TV, and you see these big audiences out there, 25,000 people, and you think that is success. I will tell you something. The real church and the success that it cherished in the 20th century was never in America. It was in communist China. It was in India. It was in Russia. It was in Ukraine. It was in Romania. It was in Czechoslovakia, which is not Czechoslovakia anymore. It was in the Sudan. It was under Idi Amin. It was in the places where to be a Christian meant you were killed. The underground church was the greatest concept that nobody knew about and the greatest secret. You know why? Because the more you persecute Christianity, you will never wipe it out. It only becomes stronger. It only flourishes.

If you go back to the book of Numbers, and we are studying the book of Numbers in our groups right now, in Numbers 11, remember what I told you? I told you that the problem that Israel had was the mixed multitude, the people that were just along for the ride. The worst church in the Bible, which we have not got to yet, the worst church in the Bible God says about them is that they are lukewarm. They are either cold, they are not dead, but they are not hot. They are not on fire. They have got one foot in the world and one foot in church. That is the church that the Bible says makes God sick. That is the church. That was the trick, the devil's biggest mistake, and he never made it twice. But he made it here, is he thought that if he would persecute the church, he would have to be a little bit more tired. No, I am telling you. What the rack, what torture, what the burning of the stake, what the cutting out of tongues, the quartering of limbs, the gouging out of eyes, the lopping off of ears, the cutting off of noses, having your head stuck in a fold of rats and letting it eat your ears and your nose and your eyes, and the snakes and skin to life failed to do. Education, money, things, cars, big houses, big bank accounts, booze, women, parties, stuff that the affluence of the world took care of.

I am telling you what, it never ceases to amaze me how the devil takes the thing. The devil never says, he said, "I cannot destroy the world and Christianity by telling them, I will just give them everything they want." I will tell you something. I remember when I was in Romania back in the 80s and I walked into a store and I watched people, it never, it changed my perspective because I was with a church, it was an underground church, and that church had more, and these believers were real believers, absolutely real, and I will never forget it as long as I live. I watched women line up in front of a bakery at 4:30 in the morning, and the line must have been a quarter of a mile, and they ran out of bread long before anybody got there. I went into a grocery store, and all that was on the shelves were eight or nine cans of some kind of stuff that was outdated by two or

three years. And yet I stayed with a family in their home that actually sacrificed to give me a meal. They killed one of their chickens that laid their eggs. What do we think of a chicken? We just drive down to anywhere you want to go, in any direction. We are out doing the shopping for the people that we took care of at Christmas time. Now remember, just standing there in Kohl's, and I asked a lady, I said, in a cosmetics thing, I said, "Let me ask you a question." I said, "How many shades of lipstick do you have here?" 400 shades of lipstick in one store by one manufacturer. Now do you know any society that needs 400 shades of lipstick is a sad society? Do you really, you realize, and you may think that is nothing, but you realize how much time that takes for you to decide what looks best on your kisser? I am not picking on the women because the guys are just as bad. Go to any pro-best shop. I mean, it is whatever you, any society that has so many things that you have to decide about, that takes your edge off what God wants you to do. I have never seen it in my life, and that is what the devil did. He knew his error was, his error was that he thought he could wipe out God's people, and it did not happen the next time around. He just got God's people to really believe that you could serve God with one foot in the world and one foot in God. That is what he got you to believe. He believed that, you know what, that you could just, there was no cost involved.

God's people are the most selfish people on the face of this planet today in the United States of America. I say that excluding most of you, if not all of you, because I hold you with a count above the rest, but I am telling you, they are the most selfish people in all the world today. Because you know what? Whatever they do for God, whatever they give to God, whatever their life is about God, it will never be anything more that will inconvenience them personally. They are the most selfish people in the world I have ever seen. They give to God out of what is their convenience. I am telling you what old Bob Jones Sr. said about time he says, "When it comes to God," he says, "you give God what is right, you do not give God what is left." That is what we do. We do it with our lives, we do it with our time, we do it with our money, we do it with everything in our lives. Because we, we are going to go to church, oh, we are going to do some things for God, but we are going to make sure that it does not impede on my personal pleasure time of what I want to do. That is how I fixed it.

I do not think you can fix that with preaching, not now. I do not think you can. I do not think you can preach that at anybody when it has been ingrained as many generations in our lives as it has been. I do not think you can keep up with the world out there that has one design, and that is to give you so many choices. You forget the most important choices to serve God. I do not know how standing in a pulpit can do that. I do not know how you can reverse that at this stage of the game. I do not know any way that you can take all that we have, all the affluence of this country, all that we have and separate it out where you see that, you know what, you do not give God what is left, you give Him what is right. Whatever you are in your life, and the only way I know to fix that, the only way I know to fix that is to have eight or nine guys out here with AK-47s arresting you as you go out of church and taking you behind the back, beating you up, throwing your wife down in the snow, kicking your kids, slapping you senseless, and then pointing a finger in your face and says, "You will come back next week and we will tell you." Then we will see who shows up. Convenience just went out the window. You think as he is slopping you there, kicking your kids, throwing your wife in the snow, or threatening your life, your big concern is,

"I wonder what blush will take this bruise off my face. Hmm, if I had just worn that perfume, enchantment, he probably would not have hit me. Oh, if I just would have had the right lipstick on." No, no, those things go out the window. Let me tell you something, that is what Christianity needs. The devil found out the first time, when you do that, that is what makes him strong. That is what makes him tough. So he took another route and he just gave us everything we could want in a country that knows no end, in a country that it is not about, will you go to the mall just to see what you do not have? That you have the plastic credit card, that you can run your brain senseless because of things you want, that you do not have. It is not about serving God, it is about what we want today. You can kid yourself about that all you want. The bottom line is, that is why Christianity is stuck in the mud and is not going anywhere. Now what it is going to take to break this thing loose is either some severe persecution or the rapture of the church itself. He did not make the same mistake twice. He just did not.

VIII. The Global Impact of the King James Bible

Now what we see around this country, what we see during this period of time begins to develop, where God just takes that old Book, those men and women who love the Word of God, those men and women that paid a price for that Book with their lives, men and women at many times they could not go down to a Christian bookstore and buy four or five King James Bibles. I promise you, they never left theirs lying someplace. No, then there was lucky, there was one Bible for every 10,000 people. When they went to a church and somebody had a page under the Bible, they memorized it, they wrote it down, they hid it in their heart. That is all they had. Oh, it is easy. I have got 10 Bibles in my house. Some of you have got just as many or five or six. Oh, we forget how precious that Book becomes. You know why? Because it is like everything else. We have got so many of them. We have got so many of them. Oh, that church of the open door, open with the key. How that Bible changed the face of Europe, how it changed the face of England, how it got opened the door. Next week when we get into it, I am going to show you how this thing goes all the way down through there.

Let me tell you something. By 1850, the British Foreign Missionary Society in England was turning out 35,000 King James Bibles a day, 22 copies a minute in every language known to man. There were 20 more Bible institutes, missionary societies doing the same thing to the tune of 2 billion King James Bibles a year going around this world. In every man's language, when you go to Africa, they speak English. When you go to India, they speak English. When you go to China, they speak English. English is a language because there was a time, and we are going to deal with it next week, where when England went, she owned three quarters of the world's land surface. When they seized one end and claimed it for England, the missionaries went in and taught little kids to read and write from a King James 1611 Bible. They learned English out of the Bible, the same Bible that our own society in America says, "I just cannot understand that old, archaic language of that Bible." That is because you are an idiot. I do not know how else to tell you. The whole world learned to read and write and to speak English from this Book. Amen. Oh, the lack of history in our lives leads us down the wrong path. That is why we need to get back to the old path.

IX. Building a Philadelphia Church in the Laodicean Age

England from 1600, I am going to show you how it happens. I am going to show you one of the greatest... You think the Red Sea crossing was a great one in the Old Testament? I am going to show you a modern day. Oh, there are a few. There are a few. I am going to show you what God... I am going to show you why America would not need an army. I am going to show you why America would not need an air force. I am going to show you because I am going to show you next week why the greatest miracles that God has done with a nation who had nothing militarily. Well, you see, that does not mean anything with God. What means is God is the key you have got. You do not need a key to the arms room. You need the key of David in your heart.

I believe with all of my heart, and this was my motive from day one of starting this church, I know we are in the Laodicean church period, and I know it is corrupt, and I know we are in the dark ages, and I do not even look at myself as a Baptist in that sense of history. I look at myself as an old Waldensian, an old Huguenot, an old Albigenian, just somebody that has got the light that wherever I go, I tell somebody where the lights are on. That is my friend. I believe today that God will build a Philadelphia church in the midst of this dark Laodicean church period. I believe the only thing lacking is the key to open that door. In fact, Jesus said to the Laodicean church, in Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." You know what that tells me? It tells me the door is shut. In Revelation 3, we get a little bit further on, the Laodicean church period is the only church in history where the door is shut, and Jesus is outside His own church. Not going to get back in.

Remember last Thursday night, somebody asked the question, you did. Nikki asked the question about the other, I went through the watches, and I showed you that thing about Him walking on the water on the fourth watch, and when they came to Jesus' name, the disciples did not even know who He was. They had lost their perspective. They walked with Him every day. They heard Him talk. They had seen Him for three years. Every day, day and night, slept with Him, ate with Him, watched Him, knew everything, but when He is walking on the water on the fourth watch, a picture of the Laodicean church period, and they are in that boat, struggling, you and me, in this world. The Bible says He would have walked right by them because they did not recognize Him. That is the state of the church today. We do not even recognize Him. We have got great churches with great steeples, with great spires, with great choirs, with great pipe organs, with great pews, with great this, with great that, great programs. The only thing that is missing is the Book and God. Help yourself. I would rather have nothing and have God like we have, than to have everything and have not God and the Book.

I know it is just me, but I am telling you, the greatest period in history that I patterned my own personal life in this church was a no... It did not take a rocket science to figure it out. It was a period of history. It did not take a rocket science to figure it out. It was a period of time when God said about that church, "You know what? I have nothing against you, guys. You are doing the job. You are doing the job. And you have kept My Word and you have not denied My name. I am going to open up a door for you."

I have been told, because we started this church, we started with about 30 people. John and I were talking about it this morning. We are running about 150 now, and everybody got together. Everybody told me, "Well, you have got to have your own building. You have got to put a big steeple up there. Ring the bell. You have got to give a visitation program. You have got to do that." You know what I said? I said the same thing that I say now. Let me tell you something. I believe this, and I still believe this. This is God's church; it is not mine. He simply said this, in John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." My job is only one thing, lifting Him up. It is His job to bring them here. We did not even have a sign out until about a year ago. I told people then, "You know what? You got here, you got here because God wanted you here because you could not find us any other way." I like it like that. People are running up and down those streets up there.

I had a guy call me this week. He said, "I saw your sign out front." He said, "I might come visit your church." I said, "That is good." He said, "Yeah, I am looking for church." I said, "That is great. Praise the Lord." He says, "What time are your services?" I said, "Well, they are 10:30 Sunday morning. I have Bible study at 9:30." He said, "You are going to have church if it snows?" I said, "Yeah, we will have church if it snows." He said, "Well, I might see you there." I said, "Let me tell you what. You know what? We have got a website." This is the great thing on the website. Where are you at, Kyle? Great thing on the website. It is good for them to go to find out to come, and it is good for them to go to find out to stay home. I never looked at it that way. I said, "You know what? Before you come, you have got to go take a few sermons off of there to find out if you like what we are serving here." I said, "This is not the Hyatt. This is the City Union Mission. We only have one thing on the plate. You want to tiptoe through and keep your little pinky up or your dirty or dirt fine. My people here smear it all over their face. They wear their food well." You are not here today, so I guess that solved that problem. I like that. I like that. Because I am telling you, and you have got to learn it. Do not ever be intimidated by anybody in doing it the world's way, whether it is your own personal life, whether it is building a church or building a ministry. Do it God's way. By the Book. Your only way to do it. Next week, we will take the second aspect of this great period of your church history, and we will bring it to a conclusion. Then we will enter into the Laodicean, and then we will move on.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You for...