

I. The Purpose of Life and the Church Ages

The book of Revelation lays out the seven periods of church history, which run from the time of the Lord Jesus Christ, or the book of Acts, right up to the time that we are living in right now, and then right up to the rapture of the church. We have really been focusing on that and gleaning a couple of things out of it. One, I want them to be able to see how the number seven already unlocks this book, which it does for most of the books in the Bible. I also want them to understand how that within these books there is a great, great, great source of material.

Sooner or later in your life, if you are going to meaningfully do anything for the Lord, and I know that that is a relative term today because most of God's people are not going to do anything for the Lord today. They are happy with their life just the way that they are. They just go to work, they come home, they have kids, they raise those kids, and then they go on with life. We are on Planet Earth, which is like a little maze where everybody is just trying to find the cheese at the end of the maze. Of course, when you get into the Bible, that illusion goes away. You begin to recognize and understand that you and I, if you are saved this morning, exist for one reason.

Let's face it, God could have done this any way that He wanted to. God could have saved you in a moment you got saved. God could have transported you to heaven and took you out of this mess. He left you here for a reason because you have a purpose in life after you are saved. Not fulfilling that purpose in life is the worst thing that you could ever do. Heaven is going to be a lot of things, but heaven is really going to be a reality for most of God's people when you get there. You are going to realize that everything on this planet in your lifetime that happened to you really meant nothing compared to what God's plan was for your life.

What I mean by that is this: God has a plan for you, and the devil wants to throw every monkey wrench into that plan that he can. When we get to heaven, we are going to find out how trivial and meaningless the real issues that we struggle with every day are, issues that we put so paramount in our lives. I am going to tell you, I know that we cause a lot of our own problems. I know that many of the struggles we go through are because we have not done what is right with the Word of God. I also know the Bible says, "All you that live righteously, you are going to suffer persecution." The devil's job is to get you focused on the downside of what you are struggling with, the downside of your life, keeping you under his foot, so to speak, so that you will waste your whole life. Yet the Bible says that God has given you the means through the Holy Spirit of God and your salvation to overcome every obstacle in life.

In the Bible, when it talks about the church, it talks about people that have overcome. That word "overcome" means you have overcome everything in the world the moment you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior. It is like me writing a check for everybody in here for a million dollars. You would go out of here saying, "Wow, Bob must have won the lottery last week!" And I would say, "Yeah, I did. I got \$258 million. I do not need all of that." I am glad you are here today. This would be a great incentive to come back to church next week. I am going to give

everybody here a check for a million dollars. Now, you could walk out of here and you could say, "Wow, I got a million dollars!" and think of all the things you are going to do with that million dollars. But the truth of it is, if you do not go to the bank tomorrow morning and cash that check, you really do not have anything.

Today, you got saved. God gave you everything in your life that you need to overcome every obstacle in your life right now. The key is cashing it, and that is what the devil tries to get you not to do. If there is anything that has helped me in my life, and I struggle with things just like you do. Just because I am a pastor, or just because I have been in the Word of God maybe a little bit longer than some of you, it does not mean that things in this world do not affect me too. They certainly do. But I have learned something out of the Word of God, and that is simply that when you begin to study the Bible and put the Bible into perspective, like we are doing in the book of Revelation, you begin to see that down through the history of the world, you have not been the only one that is struggling with things. The truth of the matter is, what we are struggling with today is absolutely nothing compared to what God's people have suffered down through the history of the church, so that you might sit here today and have a Bible that you can even open and read.

If there is anything that studying the seven churches, I hope that it does for you, I hope that it gives you a great perspective of the privilege that you have to be a child of God today and the freedoms you have to not read that Bible. It is an incredible concept when you really understand it. I think the thing that probably cemented my mindset as far as the Bible and the ministry and my approach to life in general, I think the thing that cemented in my mind and my heart was a little verse I found many, many years ago back in Job chapter 8, verse 8.

For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

When I read that verse many years ago, I realized that God had something that He wanted me to learn from history. God had something that He wanted me to understand and something that He really wanted me to put into my life. Once I began to see the price that was paid for me as a child of God, it is almost too much to ask today of a Christian to understand the price that God paid on Calvary's Cross. It really is a terrible thing to say, but it is almost too much today to go to the average Christian and try to keep them accountable or ask them if they really understand the price that was paid on Calvary's Cross for their salvation, and then why should not you serve God with your life based on that price that He paid for your salvation?

God's people do not get it today, and it is almost unrealistic to ask somebody that today because they are so far away from what God really did. Yet at the same time, it is ultra-ridiculous to go beyond that and ask the average Christian about the price tag that was paid not just by Christ, but by the men and women down through history that paid the awful cost, the bloody cost, for you and I to sit here today and for you to have a Bible and even have the choice, as I said earlier, not to read it if you do not want to. We have become a very spoiled society in Christianity, and have been so for the last sixty or seventy years. It is even worse now than it has ever been. I have never known a time, and I have only been in this thing of Christianity for about forty years, but I

have never known a time in my short time where I have ever seen God's people so indifferent to the things of God, so indifferent to the call of God.

Last week, we entered into the greatest period in church history. I told you last week that there are two vital points in history that you have to get. One is in the Old Testament, and one is in the New Testament. Really, all the Old Testament is built around the one point of the Old Testament, which was the reign of Solomon. When Solomon was on his throne, it was the greatest time in the history of the world, and everything in the Old Testament points to it and comes from it. The greatest point in the New Testament, without a doubt, is the church age that we are studying right now. We have moved through, and now we have come to the great Philadelphia Church period.

II. The Philadelphia Church: An Open Door

That church period is called the Philadelphia Church period because Philadelphia means "brotherly love." Without a doubt, it runs from about 1600 with the outbreak of the Reformation and brings us up to about 1900. It lasts for about 400 years, and without a doubt, it is the focal point of what we would call New Testament history. Everything before that point builds to it, and everything after that point comes away from it. It is a church where the Bible calls it the church of the open door. The open door in the Bible means opportunities. This church had the greatest opportunities the world has ever seen.

Last week, I thought I was going to do this in two weeks, and I just have to be honest with you, I have struggled this week. If there is anything that gives me back my perspective, that keeps me on track, it is searching back to my fathers and understanding the time period of this great church. This is what churches do not have today. This is why churches do not have anything to offer. They have lost the perspective of the real calling of God in our lives, and you and I are victims of it, just like everybody else on this planet. The only key to it is to keep your focus on the Word of God.

I will tell you, you see it in every way. It happens on a grand scale with nations, it happens on a church scale, and it happens on an individual scale. God will do some great thing in your life. God will plug you into ministry. God will give you a church that works and grows together, and everybody is working together. Then, just as everything is coming together and everything is moving in the right direction, the devil will always get in the details. What he will do is he will not bust the church up with some great catastrophe. No, he will just work underneath the scenes, and he will begin to work on individual attitudes. Somebody will get their nose bent out of joint about this. Somebody will not like the way this goes. Somebody will not like that. What happens is, the devil will always try to get in the details, and when he gets into details in your individual life, just like he will in mine, the purpose of that is simply to get your focus off the task that God has saved you to do. We have him do it all the time, and that is why you have to always come back to the focus of the Word of God.

I do not care what you go through through the week. I do not care what you struggle with in life. We all struggle with it. I mean, I care, but I mean, it cannot stop you. The only way it can stop you is for you and I to lose our focus. This church, the Philadelphia church, was the church of the

open door. It is a church that never lost its focus. For 400 years, this church, and when I say "the church," I mean the whole period of church history, never lost its focus of what God wanted it to do. If there is anything that the lessons of ministry today, not only for this church but in your own personal life, are found, it is in the searching out of our fathers in this period of time. It is incredible.

We talked about how this church had the key of David. The key of David is what opened this door, and the Bible says that when God opened the door, no man could shut it, and just as surely, when God shuts the door, no man can open it. It takes a key to open this door, and the opportunities of this door being open are worldwide. Do you know what the key was? We talked about it last week. It was your attitude of loving the Word of God and keeping your focus of understanding why God saved you, finding out what He wanted you to do, and then realizing that everything else in life, the ups and the downs, are nothing more than to keep you from fulfilling that. When you get to heaven, not only are you going to see how trivial our little problems are, but we are also going to see how all the time we had the answers that we could have overcome them if we would just went back to the Word of God. It is an incredible study.

We saw and defined the Reformation. The Reformation starts about 1522, and it really is the catalyst that opens up this door of this great church. We defined the Reformation as a time of reform. The corruption of the Roman Catholic Church had permeated Europe from one end to the other, and people were tired of all the things that were going on. We talked about how the failure of the Crusades, how the great promises that Rome had made never came through, and when the men came back from the Crusades, they were absolutely disillusioned with everything that they had seen.

I told you that most important, most important, was the breaking out of the common man with a common Bible. During this period of time before the Reformation, it is known in the Bible as the Dark Ages, and we talked about that when we came through those periods. I told you in the Dark Ages, the reason why it is called the Dark Ages is because the Word of God was not allowed to be in anybody's hands. The Roman Catholic Church made it a capital offense for you and me as a common man to have a copy of the Word of God. If you were found with a copy of the Word of God, it was punishable by death. This Bible was such a threat and such an extreme.

Someone said one time, he said he was on a crusade, and he said, "I want to stop nuclear warfare." He says, "The threat of a nuclear war is the most dangerous thing in this world." I said back to him, "You know what the most dangerous thing in this world is? Not a nuclear bomb." He said, "Well, what is it then?" I said, "The most dangerous thing in this world is the Word of God." "I do not know where you get that." I said, "Simple. I know nine countries that outlaw this Bible in 1980. I do not know one country that outlaws nuclear weapons." Do you know why they outlaw it? It is the most dangerous thing in this world because when you as an individual, and this is what the devil wants to stop in your life, when you as an individual get plugged into this book and realize that this will open the door of your life to opportunities for God, you no longer have to be the average Joe Christian, the little rat in a maze trying to find your way to the end to get the golden cheese. You now have the power of God in your life to do whatever God wants you to do. When you get in this book, you realize that God saved you for a purpose. It was not

just so you could get a career. It was not so you could have kids, get married, raise a family. It just was not so you could find a nice plush spot to live for the rest of your life. It was not so you could build some 401k program that you could retire and have a nice life and just get on with it. It was not for that. I know it was not 401k, but that is what I said. There are lots of things I do not say right, but you ought to know what I mean by now. There is more to life than that, ladies and gentlemen.

When you get in and you put it together and you begin to see that the most important aspect of your life is the same most important aspect back there: a common man with a common Bible. When the Word of God came forth and common ordinary people, and we are going to see them today, we are going to talk about it. There is no way I am going to get this done today. We are going to have to have a third session next week, and we will finish it all up, and I even feel guilty about that. But the bottom line is, when you begin to see that the thing today that is needed is what they had back there: the common man with a common Bible and the beginning of the circulation of the Byzantine text out of Antioch, which literally turned the lights back on, opened up the door, and men and women just like you and me began to take the Word of God and take it to the ends of the world.

Now, I have to put the Reformation in perspective for you, and this is the greatest example I have ever known, because when you get into reading books on church history, as far as I am concerned, they miss the whole point of the Reformation because they do not believe about the real Bible believers. They think the Reformation and the great success of it was because of Luther, Zwingli, those guys, Calvin. That is not true. I am not taking anything away from them, and they certainly did their job, but you never want to miss the point of the reality of what the Reformation was. Out of the Reformation, we know comes the Lutheran, the Presbyterian, the Church of England, and all those guys, and we know that those are called Protestant churches. The Reformation is a complex thing to study, but let me do what I do best: break it down in a simple little concept for you so you understand it.

I learned this watching the chief scoreboard after the ballgame when the coaches break these things down. It is like a football game. How many ever played football besides myself? Honey, you can go now. No, just kidding. I never played football. The coach has a big blackboard up here, and he wants to get the play out. Do you know what he does? He puts X's. The X's are the opposing force. Those are the guys that you have to get through. Then he puts O's. The O's are our guys, and depending on what kind of play it is going to be, then he lines them up. They have a strategy that they are going to try to outfox these guys here. You have the line of defense, you have the line of offense, then you have a quarterback, then you have, depending on if it is a fullback. Sometimes they play the nickel. I do not know what that means, but I love that kind of talk. You have your tailback, you have your fullback, and then you have, as far as I know, I will take a slab of baby backs. You have that whole thing out right there.

Here is how it works. This here, the opposition, is the Roman Catholic Church. God is in darkness. The O's are the Reformation guys: Calvin, Luther, all the guys who are going to break out of the Reformation. The quarterback is the Holy Spirit of God. The football is the Word of God. The goal post down here, that is where you want to score. Now, here is the deal. This is

what the Reformation was. Do not get focused on the blockers. Get focused on the quarterback and the ball and the running back. The running back was the guy who was going to take the ball into the end zone. The running backs were the Anabaptists, the Waldensians, the Huguenots, the Albigensians, the Cathari, the Bible-believing guys. Their goal was to get down to the goal line and make a touchdown and win the world to Christ. The opposition was going to block them, had blocked them. But God got him an offensive line that was going to counter the block. We call it the Reformation.

When the quarterback snapped the ball, the Reformation guys, I am going to hit you but you are pregnant. I want to do that. I was going for you, man. I got to knock you right off that chair. The blockers blocked that Catholic church. It was in your face. It was, "Your mother wears a rosary," and bang! And it held them, blocked them. The Holy Spirit of God snapped the ball, the Word of God. Get a fake play to this guy running in around, and then get a flea flicker to the Bible-believing group who ran the end run and went all the way to the world with the Word of God. Do not get caught on the blockers. You will never read that in a book on church history, but that is the way it worked. That is how you put the Reformation in perspective.

The Lutheran church came out of the Reformation, the Episcopalian, the Anglican, the Church of England, the Presbyterian. Those were all the blockers. A hundred and fifty years after the Reformation, they are just as dead and unspiritual as they were before. They never took the Word of God anywhere. It was the Bible believers that needed the blocking force to make the end run. That is what I am going to show you today.

Look at Revelation chapter 3.

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.

Now, verse 9 is a reference to the blocking. We already talked about the synagogue of Satan back in chapter 2 and chapter 3. We know what it means now when it says they say they are Jews and are not. We have covered all that. There is your opposition. There is the Roman Catholic Church. The Bible says that when this church kicks the door open, that they are going to worship before their feet. This is a time in history where almost, almost, the Roman Catholic Church goes out of business. It is a time, the greatest period of time in church history, that the world has ever seen. As I said earlier last week, three quarters of the world have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Verse 10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." This is where we will pick it up next week. We will see how this thing goes down the tube once it gets rolling. "Behold, I come quickly, hold that which, a fact which thou hast, and 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. 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 for 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."

Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We ask You today to take the Word of God. Lord, we ask You to take the men and women in this room today that want to be serious about serving God, that want to not look at their lives as their own private possessions anymore, that they want to understand that God saved them for a reason. God has called them for a reason, and God has put them into this church for a reason. That reason is not for me to control them. That reason is not for me to brainwash them. That reason is not for me to make them some exclusive little club, but Lord, to let the Holy Spirit of God burn in their hearts, to learn from their fathers the great price that was paid, not only by Christ on the cross of Calvary, but by hundreds of thousands and millions of men and women who loved that book so much, who gave their lives, gave their families, gave everything that they have, that we might have the privilege today of holding the precious copy of the Word of God in our hands. Help us, Lord, to understand and help us to apply. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for Your sake we ask it. Amen.

III. God's Story and the Bible's Global Impact

Today, I want to deal with another aspect of this period of the breaking out of the Word of God. We kind of recapped, and I showed you the real reality of the Reformation, and we even recapped what we did last week, but I want to focus on how the Word of God and its impact on Planet Earth. John Christensen, I am going to steal this from you, he preached last Sunday night down at the Mission, did a great job. One of the things he said, I heard this years ago and I forgot it, and he reminded me of it. He was talking about something, and he made a reference to history and how history is really the combination of two words: "His Story." History is nothing other than God laying out His story. History, His story. It is the account of what God is doing. We think it is the account of what Americans are doing. We have American history, world history, ancient history, modern history, medieval history, English history, French history, European history. I

have every kind of history in the world. History is about one thing: it is about His story of God's plan for mankind from Genesis to Revelation. Before Genesis chapter 1, there is no His story. Afterwards, in Revelation 22, again, we move into eternity, and there is no His story. His story runs from Genesis chapter 1 to Revelation chapter 22, and God has a plan. You just happen to be born in the last part of that time, but you are part of that plan. It is His story. You need to figure that out.

When you approach it from that aspect, you see not only in the Old Testament, we do not have time to get into that today, but in the time that we are at right now, you see the Word of God coming out of the darkness, the breaking of the other Reformers, the blocking of the opposition, and the Word of God through the Albigensians and the Waldensians and the Bible-believing groups opening up and turning the lights back on. What we begin to see is God's Spirit shaping not only the men and the groups to do it, but He is shaping the nation, the whole landmass of Europe, to get it done. It is one of the most incredible studies you will ever undertake in the Word of God: God's unfolding plan to take the common Bible to the common man.

Your Bible has only been written in three languages. Of the three universal languages of the world, when the world was a Hebrew-speaking world in the Old Testament, God wrote the Bible in Hebrew. If you were an Amalekite back in the Old Testament, or a Hittite, or a Moabite, and you wanted to get a copy of the Word of God, so you went down to your Old Testament bookstore and walked in there and said, "I want to get a copy of the Word of God," you could not get it in your language. You had to get it in the language that God counted as the universal language, and that is Hebrew. You might say, "Well, my college professor would disagree with that because he would say that Hebrew was never the universal language." Well, so much for your college professor. History is not about what your college professor views it. It is about how God views it. Back in the Old Testament, God did not put up with college professors. He just killed them. It was real simple back then, more complicated today. You have to go to court. Back then, if the nation did not do what was right, we did not have diplomats. We did not have diplomacy. We did not have sitting around a table while thousands of kids get killed out there because somebody does not want to do right, and they all do a little political shuffle. No! Moses just went up to the guy and said, "Hey, we are coming through your land." He would say, "No." That was not very convincing. "No!" "That is right." And God would, Moses would say, "Yes, I am." He would say, "No." He would say really angrily, "No!" "That is right." And then what would happen? Moses would go back to God, and he would say, "Hey, God." God would say, "What?" He says, "That guy right there is not letting your people through." God says, "What guy?" "That one. The one that said, 'No.'" God says, "Well, we will just have to see about that." Okay. Do you know what God did? God went down and just wiped them out, killed them.

Now, I know some of you liberals have a tough time with that. We probably do not have any liberals today, but I am just covering all the bases in case you slipped in. You have a tough time with that. I know God is a God of love. God would not kill anybody, right? I have news for you. When the flood came in Genesis chapter 6, probably 4.6 billion people on this planet drowned. When God went down through the Old Testament, and He stood in opposition to God, He did not call for the United Nations to parley with Him. He did not call for a ceasefire. He did not call for

Jimmy Carter to go over and work it out. He just killed them. I am not advocating killing anybody today because I am a man of peace. I just left my cover at home, but I am a man of peace. I do not want to kill anybody. I am not a violent person. I am not somebody who has dreams of murdering the Iraqis and all that. I am just a simple little country preacher living in a city. I just took it myself with a little circuit riding guide just in the last part of this 21st century, or the first part of the first century, but the end of all mankind, just trying to do my best. But I am not stupid either. I know that you are not going to get anywhere with what you are doing. I am telling you something. When you see history, His story, you understand that God is shaping the nations, and it does not give a flying flip what the United Nations thinks about it. He does not care one iota what the President of the United States, the Jacques, the Jock, the Joe over there in France, or whatever. He does not care. He just does not give a flip. It is His story. He is playing it out, and He will shape the world.

You better learn that lesson. Last week, the President went on the air, and he gave the State of the Union address. He did not have to mess up my programming. I could have told you the State of the Union before he got there. It is in a mess. Do you know why it is in a mess? Because we as Americans, me included, refused to learn the lessons that took place down through history. We simply refused to learn the lessons.

In the Old Testament, God wrote that Bible in Hebrew. In New Testament times, when the world was a Greek-speaking world because of the influence of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great, the Bible was written in Greek. It transitioned to the period right now when God is going to make the world an English-speaking world. If there is any doubt in your mind that English is not the universal language today, you do not get out much. It is taught as a second language in almost every major country in the world. You go to Korea, I do not speak Korean, but they speak English. You go to Japan, I do not speak Japanese, but they speak English. You go anywhere you go in Africa, 90% of them, I do not speak Swahili, they speak English. I am telling you, God knew, and so God put the Bible in His final form in English.

Just by a wild coincidence, during this period of time, or right before it, in 1445, a guy by the name of Gutenberg simplified the whole process because up to this point, they had to copy the Bible by hand. Last year, two years ago, I had a Bible that I had for 30 years. My wife gave it to me years and years ago, and I had put all my notes in there. I had 30 years of notes in that Bible. I had to transfer those notes over to another Bible. It took me two and a half years just to transfer my notes by hand, working at it two or three hours a day. How long would it take to translate by hand the Bible, writing it down and then putting it down? How many copies do you think you could do that way? But God gave something because God was shaping and God was getting ready. The great coach of the great football game of life was setting up the players. So He had to have a guy by the name of Gutenberg invent a printing press that when this book came out to go to the world, they did not have to do it by hand anymore. A machine called a printing press was ready to go. The first book that Gutenberg printed on that press was the Bible. I am telling you, there are great lessons from here, great lessons from here.

IV. God's Shaping of Nations: The English Example

Let me tell you something else. God is shaping the nations. In 1500, right before the Reformation breaks out, I do not know if you know this or not, but the mode of travel back then was by boat. No airplanes. When I say boats, I am not talking about Queen Mary or luxury liners. I am talking about just boats, like Columbus' boats, sailboats. Back then, all England is landlocked. Germany is landlocked. France, except for the part coast, is landlocked. They are all landlocked. The only way to get to the ends of the earth was by a nation that was a sailing nation. In 1500, there were only two. One of them was Spain. The other one was England. You better learn this, and these are some great lessons here. Only two nations were at God's disposal to take the gospel to the ends of the earth: Spain and England. Spain is totally Roman Catholic. It is run by the monarchy of Spain, whoever he may be during this particular time. It was Philip of Spain. They are all tied in together, and they have the Inquisition going where Rome is calling on a hotline to the Spanish king, and he is killing every Bible believer he can find. So Spain is pretty much out of the question.

The only nation left was the nation of England, which is just a little tiny island nation over there in the Atlantic before you get to the coast of Europe. We find that all the way back in 1300, God was forming the shape of not only men, because it came with Wycliffe, who was English, the first English Bible in 1300. Then another Englishman, Tyndale, about 200 years later, published the Word of God. God was not only transforming the hearts of men, God now is transforming the landmass of not only Europe, but also of England.

Remember last week, the first thing that happened was Henry VIII. Henry VIII is on the throne about 1534. We know the story of last week. He did not like his wife, so he wanted another wife. He tried to get the permission from the Pope. The Pope would not do it because he was married to Catherine of Spain, and that was not going to go over very good. So he broke with Rome and started his own church. Now, that does not seem like much when you just read in a history book. When you put the whole thing together and you put it in the light of the Reformation, and it is His story, it starts to make sense. So Henry VIII makes the break. He starts his own church. Now, I have news for you, Henry VIII probably was not a Christian. Henry VIII did not break the church with the Church of Rome because he suddenly had a vision that, "Oh yes, God, if You give me this other woman for my wife, I will serve You faithfully and take the Word of God." It was all about him. He cared nothing about God and the Word of God. But that does not make any difference when it is His story. Cyrus, King of Persia, did not care much about God, but he sent the Jews back when God told him to. The quicker you learn that history is His story and God is the author of history, and all history revolves around two spots, one in the New Testament, then you are going to get quicker up on the upbeat of learning where your life is at.

He only had two nations. Spain was not budging. So He began to transform the island nation of England. It starts with Henry VIII. During Henry VIII's tenure, the Reformation breaks out. The next king in 1547 is Edward VI. King Edward, I am sure you have smoked a cigar after his name at some point in your life. King Edward was pro-Reformation. He did not like the Roman Catholic Church. Under Edward VI, the Reformation found its roots in England. But what is all history about? All history is about God moving in a direction to do history, and what is the other part of it? It is Kate encounters it. So Henry VIII made the initial break. Edward VI got the thing

rolling. Then in 1553, old Queen Mary, Mary out of the Tudor family, Queen Mary comes to the throne. She has a big boat named after her. Her name is Queen Mary. She is Bloody Mary in history. Bloody Mary hated Protestantism. She was Roman Catholic through and through. I think, ladies, probably on your night out, you probably have had a drink named after her made out of tomato juice, which looks like blood. You will say with all that smirkingness, as a Christian yet, "I will have another Bloody Mary." Let me just tell you something, ma'am. You are going to have to spend an eternity in heaven with Waldensians and Anabaptists and Cathari and women who had enough Bloody Mary. She is the most wicked queen they ever had. She was the daughter of Henry VIII that he had from Catherine of Spain. So Bloody Mary is on the throne. She tries to bring it back. She wipes out all the Protestants, tries to firmly put Roman Catholicism back in. Oh, but history is history, and God has a plan.

Mary got booted off the throne, and guess who comes after that? Good Queen Elizabeth, 1558. Now she is the daughter of Henry VIII by Anne Boleyn. That is the other lady that he wanted to marry. Queen Elizabeth is a saved, born-again, blood-washed, and she is absolutely for the Textus Receptus and the received texts and getting rid of the Roman Catholic Church. She is one of the greatest queens that England ever had. The greatest queen that England ever had was, and the last great one was Queen Victoria. She reigns in the middle part of the 1800s. She reigns for 64 years. During her reign, and I am getting ahead of myself, but I want to put it in perspective here, during her reign, England hits its highest point. She reigned for 64 years. She was asked one time by the Prince of Iraq, which it was not Iraq then, it is Iraq now, what was the reason for England's success? England, she was everywhere in the world. The King of Iraq, or Persia, said to her, "What is the success of England, Your Majesty?" Do you know what she said? She said, "My sovereignty is queen." She said, "England is a great nation." Do you know what she said? A woman! She picked up a King James 1611 Authorized Bible, stuck it in his face, and says, "The Book, your Prince, the Book." Let us put her for president instead of Hillary. You say, "But she has been dead for 400 years." She will still be better than what we are going to get.

Queen Elizabeth shapes the way for the next King, James I of Scotland, who in 1603 says, "All right, I want to put a final Bible in English to the world." He commissioned it in 1603. It was finished in 1611. It took seven years. Same time it took Solomon to build the temple in the Old Testament, if you are counting. That book went by England around the world, around the world. But we are not done yet. Go back to Elizabeth. The devil, he wanted to stop it. So we have Spain and we have England. Spain is not going to do it. England is going to get it done. So God arranges the kings of England in a prospective manner that brings about in accordance with the Reformation and the printing of the Word of God with the printing press, and everything is ready to go.

But in 1588, Philip of Spain gets a phone call from the hierarchy of the Pope. The Pope says to Philip of Spain, "Hey pal, I need a little favor. Now you remember when old Henry VIII wanted to dump your daughter, I stuck by you. Now here is what we have got, here is the problem. This Queen Elizabeth is something else. She does not even recognize me as sovereign. Now here is what I want you to do. You have a great navy, it is called the Spanish Armada. England does not have a navy. They have no defenses. Here is what I want you to do, Philip. I want you to take

your Armada, and I want you to sail into England, and I want you to conquer England, and you kill those Protestants. You dethrone Queen Elizabeth, and you bring England back to the sovereign Mother Rome church, and can you get that done for me? And if you do, I will bless you above all blessings." And Philip said, "Consider it done."

So in 1588, here is the lesson. The little island of England, no navy, no army, a queen on the throne, gets word that the greatest Armada the world has ever seen, the Spanish Armada with the conquistadores, is going to wipe out England, and they have no navy. They have no army. But all England does is fall on its knees and ask the sovereign God to protect them. In the middle of the English Channel, when the Spanish Armada was there in 1588, the biggest typhoon came up you ever saw, and that was the end of the Spanish Armada. They did not need a navy. They did not need an army. They had a Book.

I do not know that you have to dig deep to get the parallels between where they are at and where we are at in America today. The Word of God does exactly today what God said it would do back there. God had a plan for England, and as long as they kept the Book, nobody was going to stop them. God has a plan for you, and as long as you stay in this Book, nothing will stop you. Do you know what will stop you? When you quit reading it, when you quit studying it, when you get an attitude and your nose gets bent out of joint because something did not go good in life, or somebody did not say hi to you, or you did not get invited somewhere, or you get this or you get that. That is when you leave the page of this Book. That is when you are going to get sunk. You keep this Book. That is why the Bible says:

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

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

This whole world is darkness, and on this road, there are booby traps, there are pitfalls, there are bungee stakes, there are toe poppers, there are knee breakers, there is every landmine in the world, and you are going to blow your legs off if you do not have something that shows you the way. How much simpler, my friend, can it be? With that event, the opposition gone, the door swings wide open to the ends of the earth where Christ is not named.

I want to tell you something. You can do what you want with this. I heard an old boy say this years and years ago when I was just a young Christian. I heard him make this parallel, and I made it myself. Do not say much about it, but it is an incredible thing. I heard an old boy say one time, "You know what? Malachi was the last time that God spoke to any man on this earth in the Old Testament." From the end of Malachi until Christ showed up at the first coming of Christ, there were 400 years where God spoke to no man. It is called the 400 silent years in studying the Bible. He said, "From the end of Malachi, God spoke the last time, and for 400 years, God never uttered a word from heaven until His Son showed up at the first coming of Christ." Then he said, "The only thing that men never learned from history, they never learned from history. In 1611, God spoke to the world for the last time." He says, "For 400 years, He has been silent because they have a more sure word of prophecy." The thing that is going to break this silent 400 years later is going to be the Second Coming, just like the First Coming broke the first 400 years. Do with that what you want.

I just know this: during this time, the phrase is coined that the sun never sets on the English soil. She has colonies and provinces in three quarters of the world. I know this: when you watch the history of America, you can say what you want, but America had never lost a war as long as she revered God in the Bible. We won the French and Indian War. We won the Revolutionary War under great duress. We never should have won it. We won the War of 1812, the war with Mexico, the Philippine insurrection, the Spanish war. We won World War I, we won World War II. Then suddenly, about 1950, when the whole country of America just wanted to drop-kick God and the Word of God, getting it out of the schools, getting it out of the families, getting it out of the churches, we drew a tie in Korea. We lost Vietnam completely. We fought the Gulf War in the 90s, and we lost that because we went right up to the point, and we did not go into Baghdad to get him then. So we spent 5,000 boys later to do it again. We are still not going to win that one. Do you know why? Because we do not have the thing that holds the fabric of society and every nation together, and that is the Word of God in our lives. That was only page two.

V. The Great Missionary Movement

When the door swings open, we see the greatest missionary movement in the history of mankind. It started right around a little bit before the Reformation over in Germany with a guy by the name of Spangenberg and Count Zinzendorf. They had a bunch of Bible believers that were being persecuted by the Lutheran church. So Spangenberg, who had a great piece of ground, allowed them to build a little place on his property. From that developed into one of the greatest missionary training schools and the greatest group of missionaries probably the world has ever seen. Without a doubt, it was the standard and the catalyst for world missions through the rest of the Philadelphia Church Age, called the Moravian movement.

From the Moravian movement, as we move through the Reformation, through this time period, through these 400 years, we find:

- The Baptist Missionary Society
- The Baptist Foreign Missionary Society
- The Church Missionary Society
- The Scottish Missionary Society
- The London Missionary Society
- The Netherland Missionary Society
- The British Foreign Missionary Society
- The American Board of Commission for Foreign Mission
- The American Baptist Missionary Union
- The American Bible Society
- And 20 more just like it.

These groups put out in 400 years hundreds of thousands of missionaries going around this world, the open door, preaching one book, the Book that turned the lights back on, that turned the Bible back to a common man in his common language, and God tore the world upside down.

For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

I am going to tell you, I would not be where I am at in the ministry in my own mindset. I do not look at it as it is successful. I just know in my heart and my mind where I am at. I would never be where I am at. I would be one of those lily-livered Twinkie Pie guys over there that just never takes a stand on anything if I had not searched my fathers and known what they stood for. If you think I am going to go to heaven and I have a lot of things to give an account for, and I do not expect anything of the judgment seat of Christ, but I am telling you this, I am not, I am not, I am not going to stand there with all of these guys with nothing in my hand. Now maybe you are.

I think of old Samuel Mills in the early 1800s, who felt the call to missions. He got around him James Richards, Francis Robbins, Harvey Loomis, Gordon Hall, Luther Rice. They lived in Pennsylvania. They would go out and work in the fields every day. Then they would meet together on one of their farms. They would sit down and they would pray for the conversion of the American Indians. Their friends made fun of them. They called them the Haystack Group. They got such a burden for missions that in time they left America. They split up and they went to the ends of the earth as the greatest missionaries the world has ever seen during that period of time.

We do not have a haystack. But I watch you guys down at the mission. I watch out on the volleyball when you have your little discipleship. I watch it when you work together with people. We do not have a haystack to build it around. But God, let me tell you, God is doing the exact same thing today. We just do not have a haystack to do it around. But He is doing it in your life. I do not think one time that I give you boys and girls somebody to work with, where you work together as little teams and you help this person, that I do not think back of this time what God was doing in their lives, how He took the things that they were doing in their daily lives. These were not professionals. They were farmers. You have the idea you have to be some kind of professional to be a really effective Christian today. Professionalism is the key byword. "Oh, you have to be professional. Everything. You have to go here. You have to get a degree. You have to do this. You have to be professional." I have news for you. Professionals built the Titanic. An amateur built the Ark.

➤ William Carey

William Carey is called the father of modern missions. He got burdened for the missions by a book that he read. It was a little book on the service of God put out by, guess who, the Moravians. He was a cobbler by trade. No formal education. He taught himself six languages. He went to India. He worked for 42 years. He translated the Bible into 44 languages and dialects. His motto all of his life was, "Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God." What is your motto? "Get as much as I can. Can all I get?" What is your motto today? What is my motto today? Do you know why we never do great things for God? I will tell you why. There is a solid piece of theology in that motto. We do not attempt great things for God. You have your career. You have your family. You have your life. "God, just get over here till I get to You." That is the difference between us and a William Carey.

➤ Billy Bray

I think of Billy Bray. What a guy Billy Bray was. He was an old drunken sinner. Started in Cornwall, England. Worked in the coal mines. When Billy Bray got saved, his life changed immediately. He was a firebrand for God. I have read his life story so many times. If there is anything that I have said to God or the young Christian, I want to have that steel in his backbone. Billy Bray was never afraid of anybody, and he always had an answer. The story goes that he was a saved man working in the Welsh coal mines. One day, one of the big wigs came down to inspect the mines. He knew Billy was a Christian. Everybody knew Billy was a Christian. So he was slinging four-letter words around and telling dirty jokes. They get on this elevator to go down to the mine, which is about a thousand feet down. Billy Bray is running the controls. He has the big mine guy and a bunch of other mine guys, and they are all cussing and cursing, making fun of God. One of them leans over to Billy and says, "Hey, Billy, how far down to the bottom of this pit?" Billy says, "I do not know, sir, but if the rope breaks, you will be there in a minute." I love it. He lost his job because of that. That is okay.

Do you know what Billy used to say? He used to say, "When I walk through life, when I put my left foot down, it says, 'Amen.' When I put my right foot down, it says, 'Glory to God.' And what I do in life is walk through it saying, 'Amen, glory to God, amen, glory to God.'" He preached a whole sermon on that one time. One of his friends said, "Billy, do not you know you are in a delusion? What are you going to do the day you wake up in hell and find out all this junk you are preaching is not true?" Billy looked at him and said, "You know what I am going to do?" He said, "I am going to walk down through the fires of hell. And my left foot is going to say, 'Amen.' And my right foot is going to say, 'Glory to God.' And I am going to walk down through the fires of hell saying, 'Amen, glory to God, amen, glory to God.' And the devil is going to come up and say, 'Billy, you cannot talk that way down here. You are going to have to leave.'" And he says, "I am going to walk out of the gates of hell saying, 'Amen, glory to God,' all the way to glory." What are you going to do? How do you answer that?

➤ George Mueller

I am telling you, my friend, you have Robert Morrison, missionary to China. The list is endless. Joshua Marshman, India. Samuel Marsden, New Zealand. Peter Parker went to Canton, China. Robert Moffat, 54 years in Cape Town, South Africa, 54 years of his life. I think of the great George Mueller. George Mueller lived back in the early 1800s. He died in 1898, almost spanned the whole century. He grew up in the state church, Lutheran Church of Germany. Do you know how he got saved? He did not get saved in a church. He went to a home Bible study with some Moravians, and they won him to Christ. He got the burden for missions, but he did not have the burden to go to missions. He had a burden to train missionaries. So do you know what he did? He started his first orphanage. There were hundreds of thousands of homeless little kids in London, and he started his first orphanage. His first orphanage took in 37 kids. His ministry spanned 68 years. At the end of that 68 years, he had five orphanages, and he was taking care of 3,000 kids a day. At the end of his life, when they looked back, they found out that he sent out to those orphanages 10,000 pastors and missionaries for every boy and for the boys and girls that he took in.

I will tell you something else. This is why I say what I say before we take the offering. If you think your money is important here, you are wrong. I do not need your money. God does not need your money. That is why this church is not about money. It will never be about money. I could care less. You give anything or you do not. Do you know why? Because God always pays for what He has ordered. You give your money like God is going to need your money. Some of you give your money like the lights are going to go out in heaven tomorrow if the light bill is not paid, and you are just the one that is going to give God the money. You are a fool. You are a fool.

Let me tell you something. Mueller read the Bible through 200 times, and 100 times of that on his knees. In the middle of the 1800s, without any support, without any churches giving him money, by praying it in, he raised \$8 million. That is an equivalent of \$20 billion by today's standard. Do you know why? Because God always pays for what He orders. When you have to manipulate God's people to give, you are out of the ministry. You are now a used car salesman. When you have to make money the focal point of that book, then you are out of business. You are just selling Amway.

Let me tell you something. If you do not keep your focus on that Book, whatever your focus is will take your priority away from God. My mindset for money is Mueller's mindset. This is God's work. It is your work. It is not mine. Either it floats or it sinks based on what we do. I really do not care one way or the other, because God will always take God's way. Do you know what? He died at 93. When he died at 93, his entire estate that he had personally was worth less than \$500, because he gave everything back to the God who gave it to him to begin with. Do you know what he learned? He learned a great lesson that God's people never learned: if you want to keep it, you have to give it away.

I can just see the mail-outs that Mueller must have sent. "Please help us. We are in dire need." I am saying it the way he would have wrote it back then in Elizabethan English. I got a series of letters one time from a, then in the vandals, he is now a pastor. I am not going to tell you where he is at because I do not want to embarrass him. But he is in this city. Okay, I will give you a clue: over in the park. He was taught by the best scammers in the world. I had got a series of letters. The first letter came in, and they were taught, and they are all taught. You notice how the first thing you know you are going to get snuggles is they try to make it look like a real letter that he wrote personally. But it is not. A computer spit it out. He did not know who you are. Then he finds somebody that can sign his name like he does, because he is not going to sign them. The only thing he wants to sign is the back of your check.

This guy sent me a letter, and he said, and he did not know who, if he knew what was going on, he would not send me a letter. Back then, I was different. I am much more reserved now. You visitors here, I am a really nice guy today. I know you just know I am. You should have seen me 20 years ago. You would never come back. You may not come back now. But you would not even be here now. You would be gone by now. I have had them in preaching where the woman says, "Oh, I have got such a headache. I have got to leave." One lady got up and says, "Oh, my appendix just burst. I have got to go." I had that effect on people. I am much milder now. But back then, when I got these letters, I preached on them on Sunday morning. I was so mad. In the first letter, he poured out his heart to us, and said that he was just, they needed money for the

ministry. Laying all this thing out, telling them about the whole things, pleading for money. "You can give this and give that." Then the second one came in was the offer. They always ask you first for money, and then when you do not get that, they come back with a sucker play. "Well, I will give you a dollar book for a \$500 donation." So that gets you. And he holds this book up like, "This book here will save your family. This book here, Revolution My Life. This book here, I never understood the Bible till I read this book." And I looked at it and said, "Well, it is in my book, so it cannot be true." He looked at this thing, and he said, "Now," he says, "for a love," I love that, "love gift, for a love gift." I would much rather you just say, "Hey, look, I am a crook, and I am broke, and I need all your money. Send me your wallet. We will take on what we will need, and we will send the rest back." I can deal with that a lot better. This "love gift" stuff, "for your love gift of \$50 or more." It cannot be a love gift of whatever you have. It has got to start at \$50 because below that is not a love gift. "Love for sale," \$50 a pop. "Love gift. Give us your love. We will give you this book that will change your life." Well, the book was a buck and a quarter. I looked it up. You can go to any bookstore and buy it for a buck and a quarter. If you had to order it, you would get a buck and a quarter for the book and what, a buck shipping. Still a lot cheaper than \$50. But this was different. This will move you because it is a love gift.

The third one I got was from his wife. The wife said, "You have not responded to our first two letters. And my husband, my husband is so depressed." Barbara, is this not true? She knows she is true because she wrote all my letters that way. We laughed at it together. We read it together. The woman says, "My husband," give his name, "is so depressed. His burden for the ministry has driven him to his knees. And would you please find it in your heart to just give something?" Now we are off the \$50 love gift, and you are not getting the book. "We are going to lift him out of depression." He wrote that letter. I looked at my wife. Remember what I said to you? Barbara, you do not. But I said, "Two weeks from now, we are going to get another one. And it is going to say, 'Hi, my name is Spot. I am so and so dumb. I have not had a big biscuit for weeks. My master is so depressed. I need you to help lift him out of the doldrums. Would you do this as a last resort? Because I would really like those chewy things. And I do not know what they are, but I need some. So please sign Spot the big paw print.'"

God's work. Not my work, not your work. God's work. You plug into the thing and see where you are at. It is between you and God what you do. You know what the Bible says. You know how it works. It is as simple as that. I really do not care one way or the other. I have more things to worry about if you are going to give, because I just assume if we are not going to do this right, I will just go get a real job someplace and do it honestly. But I am not going to insult God by every time I get up there saying, "You have got to give. You have got to give. Have you given? Have you given?" I have been in some churches where they pass, I was a kid, and I have been in some churches where they pass the plate four or five times. God looks in and says, "Let us go." When I laid in this church, it came a couple of weeks that we are going to church out north here by World's of Fun, out by your neck of the woods out there, that they lock the doors. They would not let anybody out and passed it till they got up. Got those chains with locks on them back there. Just in case. I am telling you. I do not pattern my men who have an act. Do you know who my hero of the faith is? George Mueller. He is the man. He did it then. God can do it now. I do not put myself with a George Mueller. Please do not misunderstand me. But I am saying it works for

him, and it works for me. It will work for you. It will work for you. It is incredible. I mean, 68 years, turned out over 10,000 pastors and missionaries.

VI. The Great Preachers of the Philadelphia Age

I think of Quigley Bagley, a Rio de Janeiro. J.L. Shunk to China. A.L. Jones to Liberia. This one, I love this one. W.N. Coates set up the first Baptist church in Rome and sent missionaries to the Vatican. It did not last very long. I do not know what happened to him. I do not think I want to know.

➤ Adoniram Judson

I think about Adoniram Judson, 1788 to 1850. He went to Burma. He labored six years before he won his first person to Christ. I wonder how discouraged we would get if we got into a ministry or started a church and did not have any converts for six years. We are so success-oriented. He was a flop according to the modern fundamentalist standard. He did not have the right method, did not have the right tools, did not have the right approach. He should have got one of them mail-outs. He should have ordered an evangelism crew to come in. He should have had a singing group move down the big bus, come out there and bring the crowds in. Six years before his first convert. During that time, he buried his wife and children on the field in Burma. We cannot even identify with that. But sometimes God wants to see if a man's heart is really where it is. That would be tough, losing your wife and four kids on a mission field and have to bury them in Africa and then stay by yourself. I wonder how many men would do that today.

Now, I know that is hard for you to grasp, but I know that the average Christian cannot even get to that. You think what your first reaction is, "Well, mean old God, why would He do that to a man that is serving?" Yeah, mean old God, why would He do that to His Son on the cross for me? You just missed the parallel, did you? You and I are fair game after what God did to His Son on the cross. Do you know what your problem is? You do not know that. You do not think about that. So therefore, you think you are something special. You think His Son can suffer and die on the cross in that agony from that sick ninth hour, and you are going to get cut loose and just have a good time with your life? Is that what you think? You do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures. I am telling you.

Then they put him in prison for two years. What did he do in prison? He did not get the ACLU after him, and he did not get everything else, you know, he did not get his rights violated and all that. Do you know what he did? No. He translated the King James Bible into the Burmese language. It took him two years to do it. When he got out, and at the end of his life, he had established 63 Bible-believing churches, 163 missionaries, and 20,000 converts in Burma. Do you know what his cry was? Oh, he cried when his wife died. I am sure he cried when he labored for six years without any converts. I am sure he cried when he laid his wife in that ground in Burma and his little kids one at a time. I am sure he cried. I am sure he cried when he was in prison, not knowing if he was ever going to get out. A lot of times going to prison is like going into the Ark. You know when you go in, but you do not know when you are going to get out. When he died in Burma, he had 63 Bible-believing churches because, yes, he cried with no

converts. Yes, he cried when his wife died. Yes, he cried when his children died. Yes, I am sure he cried when he was in prison. But his greatest cry that he cried out before he left America to go to Burma was, "I will not leave Burma until the cross of Christ is planted forever!" How does that compare to our cry? "Go Chiefs!" What is your cry today? Come on, as a 20th-century, modern, born-again, saved, child of God, for whom Christ died on the cross and paid the price for you because He has got something for you to do, what is your cry today? What is your greatest burden today? If it is anything more than the cross of Christ being planted, you got diverted.

➤ Hudson Taylor

I think Hudson Taylor went to China, started the China Inland Mission, spread all over China. That is why they speak English here today.

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.

Not only was it the greatest time of missions, it was the greatest time of preachers. You have men like:

- Jonathan Edwards
- George Whitefield

In the early New England area and up the Boston coast and all in the early colonies, they were responsible for the great First Awakening. Jonathan Edwards, I saw somebody back there on their seat. Somebody got four or five copies of Jonathan Edwards' message, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Who got those back there? You got those back there? I was looking at one back there, and it caught my eye when I walked in. I thought to myself, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." You could not find five Christians today to know what that sermon was about. He preached that sermon in Connecticut. I stood in the pulpit of that church a number of years ago, in the very church and the very pulpit that he preached. It was on a Monday morning, and up inside that thing was the preacher's sermon for the past Sunday, the day before, and it was the most watered down, mellow that would make you want to puke. I thought to myself, "Boy, we have come a long way from Jonathan Edwards." It says he preached that sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." He did not preach it. I do not know if it says in that book or not, he did not preach it. He read it off a piece of paper, and as he read it, he did not preach it like me. He did not walk up and down. He did not put any inflections in it. He just got up there and he began to read in a monotone language as he read that thing, and the Spirit of God fell on that place, and the whole place came to their knees, and right there started the first Great Awakening in America.

George Whitefield, called the Prince of Preachers. He used to preach seven times a day. He used to preach till his throat bled. Some of you scream your lungs out at the Royals game and the Chiefs, and then you feel bad about it all week long. "Oh, I lost my voice." I have lost it for God.

➤ Charles and John Wesley

I think of Charles and John Wesley. Charles, the great hymn writer. John, the great preacher. John Wesley in his lifetime, he traveled by horseback 250,000 miles and preached 42,000 sermons on horseback in his lifetime. Charles, the great hymn writer, "And Can It Be?" page 44 in your hymnal. "Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim," page 45. "Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," page 46. He wrote some of the greatest songs that the ears of God's people have ever heard, and they are based on the doctrine of the Word of God with the principles all through them. "And Can It Be?" What a great song that is. These two boys started the Methodist Church. Remember, we have come up so far, now you have your next church, the Methodist. Do you know why they were called Methodist? Because they were in college, and they were studying their Bible, and they were being made fun of by all the other seminary students, much like you guys, because they were not ascribing to the methods. So they were called Methodists. They called them the Holy Club. They were called the Deuterogatory because they would not subscribe to the great minds, and they were following the Bible, what Luther wrote and the Moravians. They were called Methodists because they were not following the ascribed methods that would put you straight in hell. That is where they come in.

Let me give you another great point here you do not want to miss. They both come to America from England. They hear the great revival that is taking place over here. Neither one of them are saved yet, but they caught the fire and the vision. So they come to America, and they both flop right on their face. Because they are not under the power of the Holy Spirit, they are gone. So they are going back, John is going back on a boat to England, utterly defeated. Lo and behold, as he walks the deck one night pondering his fate and why he is such a failure, he bumps into an old Moravian missionary. That old Moravian missionary opens up that Bible and shows him how to trust Christ as his own personal Savior and changes his life. Charles a little bit later gets the same thing in a home Bible study. Home Bible study. Let me tell you something. Nobody knows Charles Wesley, but nobody knows John Wesley. I bet there is not one person in this city that can tell you the name of the Moravian missionary that won him to Christ. See how it works? We think the real job was being done by John and Charles. No, no, no, the real job was being done by the nameless little guy, the nameless little Moravian guy named Peter Böhler, who on that deck God says, "Go join yourself to that man's chariot," and won him to Christ. All we ever hear is the great John Wesley. What God sees is a little Peter Böhler in the Bible.

- Other Notable Preachers
- John Newton, who wrote "Amazing Grace."
- Christmas Evans, born on Christmas Day 1766 in Wales, a Baptist preacher. Worked in the coal mines, preached in the coal mines, in the open fields, on the street, wherever he could get.
- Peter Cartwright, great frontier preacher down in Georgia and on the eastern seaboard. Great frontier preacher. He was as rowdy and rough as he could come. Many times, when he started to preach, the guys would make fun and start to, he would stop the service, go beat the tar out of them, and come back up and finish the sermon. Something else. One time he is preaching the service, and Andrew Jackson, the great general, comes in, and the pastor leans over and he says, "You need to be careful. General Andrew Jackson just came into the service." He says, "Well, if General Jackson does not get saved, he is going to split hell wide open just

like everybody else in this room." He did not give a flip about anybody. And he preached the Word of God.

- Charles Finney, who shook the whole eastern seaboard for Christ.
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great English Baptist preacher, started a great Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. In his time in the 1800s, every time he preached a sermon on Sunday morning, every newspaper in the United States put that sermon in the paper in its entirety for every American to read. Try that today.
- Dwight L. Moody, the great preacher from Chicago, started Moody Church, Moody Bible Institute, reached the world through all the American preaching and teaching that he did. Without a doubt, if you read about him in history, he is called the greatest, most loved evangelist in America. You could ask anybody in this world just about who is a saved person, they probably would know and recognize the name of Dwight L. Moody. But nobody knows the name of Edward Kimball. Do you know who Edward Kimball was? Here it comes again, right across the plate. Edward Kimball was the shoe salesman that won him to Christ. See how that thing works? It is not the big guys, folks. It is us little guys down underneath the surface just giving them what for. That is what it is all about.
- B.H. Carroll
- C.I. Scofield, Civil War General. Civil War General, got saved after the Civil War, becomes one of the greatest Bible preachers and teachers, edited the Scofield Reference Bible, which was the greatest reference Bible for probably 75 years, later wound up becoming the Attorney General of Kansas. Incredible study. It is a study.
- Gypsy Smith, the list is endless.

VII. Lessons from the Fathers: Three Lives of Faith

I have to tell you this, and I have to quit. Next week, I am going to show you how this thing, now we saw how it started. I gave you a great understanding of how it is. Now next week, I am going to show you how it got stopped. I am going to show you what happened to bring the church to the sad state that it is today. But I have to leave you with three things. I have studied church history, and I am going to tell you, at some point in your life, when I meet with you leadership people this Friday night, one of the things I am going to do is I am going to show you a list of books that you need to get. You can buy them probably on the internet for nothing because nobody wants them anymore. But I am going to show you what you need to get and what will, because these things changed my life.

Three stories, reading in church history as I was searching the files, they all impact me, but there are three that I never forgot. There were three that I thought to myself, "God, if I ever, wherever I go, whatever I do, I do not ever pretend to be like these guys. I do not ever pretend to accomplish what these guys. I do not think I am on any spiritual level with these guys. It is not like I am comparing myself with these guys. I just want what these three guys had."

➤ 1.) Thomas Cranmer

My first one I think about is old Thomas Cranmer. Old Thomas Cranmer was the Archbishop of Canterbury, 1536, during Bloody Mary's reign. Thomas Cranmer was a born-again, blood-

washed Baptist. He loved the Word of God. He may not have been a Baptist in practicing, but he was a Baptist in his theology. He began to preach during Bloody Mary's reign, and immediately he was thrown into solitary confinement. They brought him out of solitary, put him in solitary confinement for like a year. He did not see anybody. They beat him and they tortured him, and they did all of the things that only the Roman Catholic Church could do. And they broke him. They told him, "Thomas, if you recant and you sign a paper saying that you are sorry for your sins of preaching that Bible of the Reformation and taking a stand against the Roman Catholic Church, we will let you out of prison, and we will restore you back to the Archbishop of Canterbury, only this time to Rome." Do you know what he did? He signed it. He signed the recant that he rejected the Bible, he rejected salvation, and that he would accept the Roman Catholic Church.

Well, he went back to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Holy Spirit of God just would not let him rest. He was so burdened about what he did. Just like old Jeremiah, he could not stay. One morning he got up on a Sunday morning to preach, and he had the prescribed text that he was supposed to preach, and he threw it away, and he opened up the Bible. He just gave them hellfire and damnation, went right back the way he was. They got him again, put him in prison, and tortured him. This time there was no recanting. They were going to burn him at the stake. On that day in 1536, they brought Thomas Cranmer out to burn him at the stake. The fire was there with the wood. The fire was over here. The wood was there with the stake, and they were going to take him over, and they were going to tie him to that stake. The Pope was there to try to get him to absolve himself of his sins, of the Holy Mother Church. But there was no recanting this time. They were going to kill him. The only way to come to the conclusion, the only way to purge this martyr, was to burn him at the stake. As they led Thomas Cranmer to that thing, Thomas Cranmer said, "May I just have a moment to pray?" And they all laughed and said, "Pray to your God, you sinner, because we are going to send you to the fires of hell." Do you know what Thomas Cranmer did? The fire was burning back here that was going to light his fire. Thomas Cranmer went over and knelt down and prayed in front of that fire and took that hand and put it in that fire. With his head down praying, that hand burned and burned and burned and burned black and burned raw and burned as everybody gasped. When he was done praying, he walked back over to the priest and the magistrates, and he stuck his hand up and he says, "I am ready to die now. I purged the hand that denied my Savior." Folks, you are going to have to spend eternity with him. That changed my life. I am far from perfect. I do not claim to be. I am not going to make as many mistakes as anybody else, but I am going to tell you something right now. If I ever find myself in that position, I, by the grace of God, my prayer is, "God, give me the steel in my back to be a Thomas Cranmer at that point."

➤ David Brainerd

I think of David Brainerd. David Brainerd in his day was looked at as the greatest flop in missions. David Brainerd lived from 1718 to 1747. He died at 29 years of age. God called him to be a missionary to the American Indians in New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and all that area there in the colonies. David Brainerd never won one convert in his life. He died of fever at 29 years of age, worn out, broken down. He looked like a man of 60. David Brainerd spent his

whole day out in those pine field trees. Let me tell you something. When I used to preach up in New York State and some of those places, and I would get up on the side of those very places where he was, I remember one time up there I went out late at night with a deep snowfall, and I walked into those big pine trees that you could not find north, south, east, and west. It was so quiet and it was so still. I read the journal and the diary of David Brainerd. Most of you never bothered to pick it up. But I read about his life, and I read how he was burning with fever so bad, but he wanted those Indians to be saved, and he would kneel down in that snow and pray for hours. His fever-wretched body would burn deep holes in that snow as he sat there and knelt there and prayed and prayed and prayed and prayed. He died of consumption and tuberculosis at 29 years of age, and all the world around him looked at him and thought, "What a waste. What a waste. What a waste."

Oh, yes. What a waste. It was William Carey, the great missionary to India. It was Robert McCheyne, the great missionary to Israel. It was Henry Martyn, the great missionary to India. And 10,000 others like him that when God began to light the fire of missions, it was the life and journal of David Brainerd that they read that lit the fire that took them to the ends of the earth. "Oh, God, give me the strength to stand for You in the hardest adversity. But, oh, God, let me understand that it is never about the results. It is about the attitude and the commitment of heart to serve You."

> David Livingstone

My last story, and these three shaped my life. The last story is the story of David Livingstone, 1813 to 1873. He spent 30 years in Africa. I mean, the deepest interior of Africa. He traversed in that period of time over half the whole landmass of Africa preaching. He had gone for a number of years. Nobody had heard from him. The New York Herald sent out a reporter by the name of Henry M. Stanley to find him. He looked for him for five years. They said in his journal, one day after five years of searching, "We crossed a little river. We saw some smoke of a camp." He said, "We have been walking for days, and we walked around a little trail around a thing into a clearing. And there I saw the only white man that I had seen in the last five years." This is where the famous phrase comes in, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" And he met Dr. Livingstone. Dr. Livingstone gave his life for Africa. I look at his life, and I hear, I see all that he did. After he died, Stanley was so moved that he never went back to the New York Herald. He became a missionary, and he finished the work that Livingstone started.

When Livingstone died, the African natives carried his body all the way back to England where he is buried in Westminster Abbey today. But before they took his lifeless body that had burned itself out for God on the fields of Africa, they did one solemn ceremony that seems gross and grotesque to most people. Those African natives cut out his heart and buried it in Africa.

When I look at Thomas Cranmer, I said, "God, give me the steel in my backbone to stand against every adversity that I ever may face in life." When I saw David Brainerd, I was forced to ask God, "Dear God, never let me focus on the big things, the results. Let me always just keep focused on what I need to do. And God, You use me however You want to change whatever You want to change and whoever You want to change it in." But when I come to David Livingstone, I

always ask myself this question every day. You should ask your question this today. Child of God, you have heard me say it this morning. You have heard everything I have said about the price that was paid on Calvary's cross. You have seen the greatest period in church history where men understood that price and went and paid it to the extreme. Then I have ended with this story, and it is a challenge to me. So I give it as a challenge to you. Let me ask you a question. If you died today, it is real simple. If you died today, where would they bury your heart? Where would they bury your heart? That is the question. If you died today, where would your heart be buried?

Those three things have kept me honest with God and the Word of God most of my life. When I look at those three, there is not a day that does not go by. There is not a young man that I do not deal with. There is not a situation that I do not deal with. There is not something that I do not deal with in everybody's life in this ministry that I do not look at those three things and I do not say, "God, give me the steel in my backbone. Keep my attitude and aim with me. Lord, where would they bury my heart if I died today?" That is the question. The answer to that is based on what Christ did on Calvary's cross. The greatest period of time in church history is about men and women's hearts. We did not even have time to get into the great women of that period, the Mary Slessors that went to the lepers in India, the Fanny Crosbys. We just touched the surface of it. But the bottom line is this: you will never be God's man, and you will never be God's woman, and you will never get your focus and keep your focus where it is at until you understand and search your fathers. There was a price paid to get you here. Do not get so comfortable you forget to pay the tab you owe. He saved you for a purpose and for a reason.