

Romans 16:1-4, 17; 1 Corinthians 4:9-13; 6:19-20; 2
Timothy 2:15; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Ezra 1:1-4; 1
Chronicles 36:23 Sunday 6/17/2007

We have to look behind, and we have to look ahead. In order to do that, to look around, look behind, look ahead, you have to know where you came from. You have to know where you are, and you have to know where you are going. If you are going to be an effective minister of the Word of God, which we all are, you need to keep all those things in perspective constantly.

As we consider that, the message today will consider three things: where we are, where we came from, and where we are going. Let us pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You as a man of stammering lips today. I pray that You will take these stammering lips, and You will take Your Word and the message that You have given me, that I can preach to these people of God, and that they can take the message, Father, and they can apply it to their lives in a meaningful, effective, and powerful way. Father, I thank You for Your presence this morning. We claim the promise that You are here with us. I pray that You touch each and every heart that comes under the hearing of the Word today, that You will take it, You will grow it, and You will make it effective and prosperous in their lives. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

As we go to consider, we are going to do three things today. We are going to go several places in the Word of God, so buckle up, hang on to your seatbelts, and here we go. We are going to consider Cyrus, we are going to consider Sennacherib, we are going to consider where we are, and we are going to consider Rome. We will consider all those things.

I. Looking Behind: Our History and Foundation

First of all, we are going to consider where we came from. As Old Paths Baptist Church, as every church, we all have a history. There is a history that brought you all here. There is a history that goes back to where some of us got saved. As we consider that history, some of you need to know there is a pulpit that stood here a year. This pulpit has been here since the day you walked in the door. The pulpit is made of wood.

I want to challenge some of you: there is an inscription on this pulpit. You need to know what that inscription is. You need to know what it means, and you need to know why it is there, because it is the basis of what we have as a church. As we go back to the history of Old Paths Baptist Church, we have to look behind to look around to look ahead.

So, looking back, bear with me if you would for a minute, and go back to the book of Ezra. We are going to start there. We are going to come through Ezra. We are going to go to Nehemiah. We will be in Acts a little bit, and then we will finish up.

Ezra 1. Actually, we are going to pick it up in 1 Chronicles 36. We will begin there. You have to understand where Cyrus was. The Word of God says:

1 Chronicles 36:23

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

This takes place in 537 BC, when Cyrus, King of Persia, who is a type of the Antichrist—one of the major types of the eighteen types of Antichrist in the Word of God—had conquered all the world. At that time, Jerusalem was broken down. What Cyrus said was, "the LORD God of heaven." So even a man that is a Gentile, not a man of God, God gave him a perspective of where he was at with the things of God.

He said, "He hath given me and charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among all his people? The LORD God be with him to let him go." The people of the nation of Israel always had a man. There has always been a remnant. All the way through to God, you have heard Bob preach to you that there is a remnant, there is a line that you are to pass along the Word of God to men who are apt to preach. That line goes back.

Old Paths Baptist Church, the history of where it goes back to, Bob says in Jeremiah 16, where he gave you the charge of where the church came from, to go back to the Old Paths. There is a reason to be at the end of where the Old Paths came from. God passed down through time. There was a time before some of you here, or some of you there, where God dealt with some of us, and God passed down situations to us, and God created things that we had. There are some men here that go back to the Old Paths that they had to consider where they came from. God passed it down. Those men are still here. They know where this pulpit came from. They know why it came. Those guys are here. They have a history. You need to go back to some of those guys who are pillars, who know where things came from.

In Ezra 1:1, it says:

Ezra 1:1-4

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

This is Father's Day. Old Paths Baptist Church, looking behind, will never be any stronger than the men of the church that God has given it. We have a Remembrance or Reunion Sunday coming up on July the 8th. At that time, there are going to be some men of this church that are being given charge. There were men in the church in God, which goes back to a remnant. There were some men that God gave His Word to, that there are a remnant in a time where Old Paths Baptist did not exist, except in God's heart.

As we go back to that time, I am going to give you how things were passed down and how you as young men need to know what those things are, where God came from in dealing with those things, and how God brought us to this point, and how He is going to raise you up to be strong men, that we will be no stronger than how you are in dealing with that.

It says here in Ezra 1:3, "Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him." If you are going to be a man of God, you have to understand where God is and you have to know that God is with you. You have to go back and be willing to be a man, a strong man, to pay the price and take upon you the commission that God has given you. God is looking, we have stirred 39 Bibles to those of you that would hear, that God is looking for the right man in the right place at the right time. Some of you need to be that man. You need to know when God called you.

I can go back in my life and know there was a time where Old Paths Baptist Church did not exist anywhere but in the heart of God. There was a time when things were stirred up. There was a remnant of the world, and God came down and shook everything up. Old Paths Baptist did not exist. There was a time when some of you do not need to know all the particulars, but there was a time when it was not there, it did not exist. There was a time when some men had to stand up, take the Word of God, hold it in their hearts, and know what God had called them to do. You have to do that in your heart and in your mind.

He says, "God be with you." You have to know in Ezra, in the world, Cyrus is the type of the world. At this time, what you have to understand is that Jerusalem had been completely destroyed. The men of God had gone into apostasy. The kingdom of Solomon was gone. God took and He sought to build the kingdom back. He said, "Go back." The world was under the domination of the kings of the earth, the Gentile kingdoms of the world. There was a remnant that God wanted the men in Jerusalem to go back to. What you have to do is take that upon you.

We are going to install people as positions of power in this church. God has called us to go back. God raised up those guys to remember, those guys that know where this pulpit came from. Remember there is Ezra. Ezra took them back. "And whatsoever remaineth in the place where he is, let all the men of his place help him with silver and with gold and with goods and with beasts and with the freewill offering for the house of the God that is in Jerusalem." Ezra 1:4. Remember those things. Remember those things that God needs to build upon.

II. The Pulpit's Purpose and the Church's Calling

Turn with me if you would, bear with me, and I am going to go with you where the inscription on the pulpit comes from and where we need to be as a church and looking back. Nehemiah 8, and this is the inscription that is on this pulpit, is Nehemiah 8:1-8. Nehemiah is the book directly after Ezra. Here, ladies and gentlemen, this is where we need to be as a church in the world, in Rome, which we will go to by the time that we are finished.

Nehemiah 8:1-8

And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which he had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

The purpose for the pulpit stands in Nehemiah 8:1, and the purpose of where we are at is for the Word of God in a dark, godless, vile, and evil world. The purpose for where this pulpit of wood is, is for the man of God. It talks about the men here with God, and the men went back, and the people, verse 1, gathered themselves together as one. That is the purpose of what this pulpit stands for. It was built by a man. It was made of wood. It went back to a day when we preached to a crowd of only five people. Some of you know where that came from. There was a day when Bob Alexander could not come and preach before you. There was a day, some of you know what that was, and we do not need to go into an opportunity, there was a day when God scattered some of His people. There was a day when God called a remnant. Most of that remnant is in this church today. Those of those who remember that: Jimmy Steinmetz, Phil Christie, Jan Hepworth,

John Bousquet. There was a day when God brought together some of the men when things were scattered, when things were in turmoil, when things were not what they are today.

Ladies and gentlemen, and I will cover this in great detail before we are done today, but you have to understand the great thing that you are given here. You have to understand what God has done for you. You have to understand the tremendous, tremendous, tremendous blessing that God has bestowed upon you. In this day where we are, and we will get to this in a minute, in Rome, where all the evil of the world seeks to destroy the Christian, seeks to break them down, seeks to attack their families, seeks to destroy their lives, seeks to inundate them with all the violence of the world, God has called you together where the truth, where the truth of the Word of God is preached, where the truth of the Word of God is given to you from men, for men, for holy men of God, men to stand up.

There have to be men that stand up for things. There cannot be one pastor that does the whole thing. We will get into that. I am not going to steal the thunder of July the 8th, but there have to be men. If you are going to discharge some of your men, you are going to be in places where you have responsibility. You have to stand behind the man and the man whom God has called to bring together for Old Paths Baptist Church. You have to stand up and you have to be men. If we stand up and do that and get to that place, you have no idea. You have to have the vision. You have to look behind to know where we got, and you have to look around to know where we are. Then we will have to look ahead to see where we are going.

But looking back, when the world was gone, when everything was in a mess, where the temple was gone out of Jerusalem, where God had sent the people of God into the world, He even took a Gentile king, who was Cyrus, who was of the devil, who was a Gentile man. He told him, He put it in his heart, "There is a remnant of God's people." When He did that, He said, He told the remnant of God's people, "Who will stand up for God?" There have to be some of you. They stood up as one back in Ezra 1. They got to the pulpit of wood in Nehemiah 8.

In Nehemiah 8:1, "And all the people gathered themselves together as one, as one, into the street, as before the Watergate," water being likened to the Word of God. "And they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses," the preaching of the Word of God, "which the LORD had commanded to Israel," given to His people. Understand the dispensation of where we are at, His people. "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation," brought it before all the people, "both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding." They could hear all the men, all the women that could hear, and had understanding. Hear the Word. Understand the Word.

"Upon the first day of the seventh month." Now it is Father's Day. Notice it is the first day. Notice when we are supposed to come together. Notice when we are supposed to give honor and glory to God all the time. But God gives us a command to gather together on the first day of the week. The first day of the week, we are to stand up and give all honor and glory to God. We are going to do it every day of the week, but that is the first day of the week when God tells us to come together.

Going back to that, Romans 12:1, let me digress a little bit. God tells you on doing that and coming together, He says:

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

When we come together, we are a sacrifice. When we come together on the first day of the week, we are to give our best to God. When we meet here on Sunday morning, when we get together on the first day of the week, when the Word of God is preached, when we stand up and we give understanding and we all come together as one, when we stand before the Watergate where we are cleansed with the Word of God, we are to be a living sacrifice unto God. If you do not, gentlemen, go back, charge your families, and understand what that sacrifice is. If you are going to serve God, men, women, but primarily men, you have to become that living sacrifice. You have to become the best that God has to offer. If you are going to become a living sacrifice to God, God does not want secondary. God wants your best. When you walk into the house of God on Sunday morning, if you are not prepared to give your best, if you are not prepared to be your best, if you are not prepared to be that sacrifice, then God probably will not accept that in the long run. God will not use you in the capacity that He can use you to where you want to be an effective offering into the world.

Nehemiah 8:3, "And he read therein before the street that was before the Watergate from the morning until midday." You have to understand what the Jewish morning is, ladies and gentlemen. This is how undisciplined we have become sometimes in our Christian walk. Jewish morning started at 6 a.m. Ezra was behind the pulpit of wood at 6 a.m. preaching the Word of God to the people that understood as one. He said he preached to them until midday. That is six hours. That is noon. Bob has talked to you gentlemen about discipline in your lives, and I promise you there is not one of us that is that disciplined in this room right now. How many of you all could sit here from 6 o'clock in the morning, ready to go at 6 o'clock in the morning, sit here at 6 o'clock in the morning, ready to meet with God at 6 o'clock in the morning, and be attentive to the Word of God until midday? None of us. Not a one of us. None of us have discipline in this day and age. That is where we are at.

He read therein before the street, verse 3, before the Watergate, "from the morning and the midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand." Notice he read before those that could understand. If you want to understand the Word of God, I charge to you that you better have spent some time in the Word of God. Ezra was standing to preach to men and women for six hours that had spent time, they were able to understand, that is what God says here, all week long. Then they brought a man together. They brought them all together. Preach the Word of God to them. They understood. They understood. If you are going to understand, you better let this Word be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus.

If you are going to be a man, if this church is going to be successful, if we are going to make a difference in this world for the things of God, and we will get there in a minute because there is a price to pay, and if you are going to be a man of God, you better understand what that price is.

Gentlemen, it is not cheap. You better be tough. You better be one tough dude if you are going to get there.

Ezra stood up, or Nehemiah, no, it is Ezra, I am sorry, bear with me a little bit. Guys, bear with me. I have senior moments every once in a while, believe it or not. I am eligible for AARP. I do get my cards in the mail. So just give me a little latitude from time to time.

Go back to Nehemiah 8:3. "And he read therein before the street, that was before the Watergate, from the morning unto midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." Attentive, could understand the book of the law, the Word of God was preached. "And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood." I have to be careful about that. I will be back at the dock. I appreciate you guys that prayed for me this week, which they made for the purpose. There is a purpose for the pulpit. There is a purpose for the pulpit of wood.

I command to you, this pulpit of wood was built, and ladies and gentlemen, it was built good. We have been here four years. This pulpit was around a good four years before Old Paths Baptist Church ever existed. I know who built it. I am going to charge you to find out, because if you are going to be a leader of this church, you understand where the remnant came from. I understand why I picked the commission on here. This commission has been on this pulpit since some of us preached behind it all the way back to 1999. The pulpit of wood was built for that purpose. We did not exactly know those men. They did not exactly know Old Paths Baptist Church was going to exist someday. I had no idea.

But I tell you what they did know. They did know that God had called them to do a work. They did know that God had charged them to preach the Word of God. They did know, in a lost and dying world, that they had to hold their families together. They did know that God was going to do something with them. They did know that someday there was going to be a church that stood up and was powerful for the Word of God. Those men that did know, one of those men built this pulpit. He built that pulpit, and they preached, and they preached, and they preached, and they preached. Primarily they were preaching to survive, I can tell you that. They were preaching to take care of their families, but in those days they were preaching. God showed the Word that someday He knew that Ray was going to be here. He knew that Steve was going to be here. He knew that Kyle Powers was going to be here. He knew that Steve Peterson was going to be here. He knew that Harry was going to be here. God knew. We did not know. Those men did not know. But they did know one thing, that God gave them a commission. If you are going to be a man of God, you have to know exactly when God gives you that commission. You have to know exactly what it is. You have to know exactly what it is, and you have to have the guts to follow it, because you do not always know where it is going to take you. That is where the pulpit came from.

Notice there were men around him. There were men around him that, I cannot pronounce all these names, and Bob Alexander cannot either, so I am in good company. But those men were there, and those men are here today. Those men are here. They supported Ezra when he got up and preached the Word of God. They were men, and we will go there. God wrote their names

down. God wrote their names down in the New Testament, but before we finish today, we will get there. The names are there. God knew they were going to be there. God knew that all the men, they are going to be responsible men in this church. God knew when this pulpit was built that you were going to be here. God knew that He had to have men that would preach the Word of God, that would hold true the Word of God, that would keep the thing together, that would bring the church here. He gave you a pastor who is not here today, who is devoted and given his life, and has gone through things that some of you would never be able to deal with in your entire lives, that he could stand here, and he could preach to you, and he could pour his soul out to you, that you could be victorious in this vile, filthy world that is controlled by Rome.

Nehemiah 8:5, "And Ezra opened the book, and the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up," and knew what the power of the Word of God was. They gave honor and glory to God. Now, I am not recommending that you all stand up, but they gave reverence when reverence was due. That is the point. "And Ezra blessed the LORD." Notice he gives honor and glory to the great God. "And all the people answered, Amen, Amen," Old Testament. You know where "Amen" came from. "With lifting up their hands." God gave me a thought, but I am not going to go there. "And they bowed their heads and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground." They gave reverence when reverence was due.

Also, Jeshua and Bani and Sherebiah and Jamin and Akkub and Shabbethai and Hodijah and Maaseiah and Kelita and Azariah and Jozabad and Hanan and Pelaiah and the Levites, men of God, priests called to minister the Word of God, "caused the people to understand the law. And the people stood in their place." Now, come back to where this place here references. Do not forget it. We will come back to you in a minute and cause the people to understand the law. You have to be able to cause the people of this church to understand the Word of God. Ladies and gentlemen, that is not entirely Bob Alexander's responsibility. We will get to that in a moment. We are going there. Bear with me. I have some time here. That is the responsibility of each and every man in this church. Ladies, I will get to you in a moment, but I am speaking to the men for right now. We will get to there, and we will find out if you have got what it takes to be a man of God. We will get there in a few moments. We will find out.

But I am going to tell you what. If this church is going to be a positive force, if this church is going to be powerful, if this church is going to reach the world for Christ, and we will get there in the book of Acts in the church of Thessalonica, in the church of Jason where Paul preached, it was known, and go back and find out what Thessalonica is. Thessalonica is in Asia, which is in Turkey, which is right in the middle of the Muslim world today. If Satan was there today, I promise you he has been around a long time. He was there then. Those men, and they knew the testimony of what Paul preached at Thessalonica.

Bear with me just a moment. I learned from an old grizzled man of God a long time ago, if you are going to say something, you better have a book, chapter, and verse. It was not Bob. This grizzled old man came and preached to us. You were pregnant with child number one, were you not, Jan? Was not he, did not he have child number one when we heard, when Mel came in? A grizzled old guy, gravelly old voice, rough around the edges, I promise you. I can hear him right

now. Boy, if you are going to preach it, gentlemen, if you are going to be a man of God, right, Jan? You better know, book, chapter, and verse. So let us go there.

Acts 17. You do not have to go there, just listen. It is on the tape as Bob says. This occurs at Thessalonica.

Acts 17:5-6

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

Mark it down. We are going to go to Rome in a moment. Mark it down because if you are going to be a man of God, you are going to get attacked by Rome. You are going to get attacked by people who are moved with envy. "And they took upon them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company and set all the city on an uproar and assaulted the house of Jason," mark it down. If you are going to be a man of God, you are going to preach the things of God, your house is going to come under assault, fellows. Your personal house and this house, you better be prepared to protect it. Father's Day message, here we go.

"In the assault of the house of Jason," but here is the point, "and when they found them not, they drew Jason," verse 6. "When they found them not, they drew Jason, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down." The world was a big place back then. The world was controlled by Rome back then. If you do not know who Rome was, Rome is the greatest enemy that Christianity has ever had. Rome has sought to wipe Christianity out from the day that it was formed. From the day that God placed Christianity upon them, and they were first called Christians at Antioch, Christians being little Christs. So there is your example. There is your model. "These have turned the world upside down."

We run maybe on an average day around here, 150, including everybody, including kids and everything, 150 people. We are just a small little group. But there were only 13 of them back when Jesus first walked the earth, and one of them was Satan's tool. When that group took full hold of the power of God, at this point, if you go back in the book of Acts 17, you will find that this setting occurs in Thessalonica. We are back in Nehemiah. We went back to Jerusalem, where it was sent back from Persia. If you want to know when we get to where we are at, look around if we get there. I will do the best I can, but we may not get there. Persia, Rome.

III. Looking Around: Our Present Reality and the Cost of Discipleship

Where we are at today, I am not going to wait, ladies and gentlemen. They are still there. The same scenario, different place, different time, really still exists. The world is still there. The world still seeks to stamp Christianity out. The world still seeks to destroy you. This group of

150 men, women, children, if they so choose, if they allow God to do the work that He wants to do, I charge you, has the power to turn the world upside down. Now, it is your choice whether or not you want to be included in that. If you choose to be included in that group that wants to turn the world upside down, and we will get there, you may not be looked upon so great in this world. You may have some things that you have to deal with in this world, and you better be big enough to deal with it. But by goodness, as Paul got the vision, and we will get there, there is a world to come that lasts forever and ever and ever and ever. You can choose where you want to be adorned. You can be adorned in this world, which you may have if you are lucky 70 years, which is all God promises you. Or you can be adorned for all eternity with the inheritance in the kingdom of God. Your choice. As Bob told you, the man is here. You can take a little, you can take a lot. It is your choice. Turn the world upside down.

Let us go back to Nehemiah 8 for a moment. Verse 8, "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly." They did not pitter-patter around. They did not mealy-mouth around. They did not come speaking a lie. They had something to say. If you are going to be a man of God and you are going to be effective in the world, you better have something to say. You are worthless to God. If you are going to be a woman, if you are going to be a godly woman, you better have something to say. Not only do you have something to say, it would be a good idea when you know when to say it too. Trust me. God lets you know when it is time to speak up. If you have got any backbone, God lets you know it is time to speak up, you better speak up because He may only give you one chance. It is all He is accountable for. When He opens the door, you better be ready to go through it. You better be ready to go through it quick because it may slam shut fast. As the proverbial saying goes, do not let it hit you in the behind on the way out. That is not a word of God. I just thought I would throw that in, since I have heard that all my life.

"So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading." That is the purpose of each and every person in here. We will get to that. Gentlemen, some of you, ladies, some of you, are in positions of discipleship. You are dealing with people. You deal with them each and every day. You are given charge to raise those people up, and God has given you a responsibility. We will get into doctrine, we will get into where you need to be, we will need to go with things you need to say, we will get there later in the message. But let me plant this seed in your brain right now. If you are doing that, you are dealing with people's lives. You are dealing with people's eternity. You are dealing with the people that will affect eternity. You better take it serious. I promise you, it is more than, at one time it was 16 lessons, now it is 10 lessons. It goes there and there. But the bottom line is, it is the Word of God and it is building bases in people's lives. If you are doing that, you are dealing with one of those people, God help you if you do not know what you are doing. God help you if you do not vocally understand where you are supposed to be. God help you if you do not take it serious enough that you are willing to impart your very life in that person. That you are willing to die for that person. That you are willing to give up everything you have for that person.

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But 1 John 3:16 says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our

lives for the brethren." It goes back to where that is the martyr's crown and that is the martyr and this or that and the other. But let me propose this to you, you can be a martyr in more ways than just dying a physical death. You can be a martyr in dying to self. If you are going to be a man of God and you are discipling somebody, your time, your life is time. Time is all you have got and you better use it wisely. If you are sitting with someone, whether it be your children, whether it be your wife, whether it be somebody you are discipling with outside of your immediate family, but in the family of God, you better take it seriously. You better know where you are going with it. You better know how to deal with that person and you better be willing to impart your life to that person because if you are not, you have got no business doing it. God will hold you accountable. You better get it.

We have looked behind a little bit. Let us look around a little bit. We have looked behind, we know where things come from, we know where the pulpit of wood came from, we know that the Word of God was supposed to be spoke distinctly. If you need a little bit of background of the history of where this church comes, I am not going to go into all details. I will leave it to you to find out some of that stuff. There are some men around here you can ask. They will give you some idea. If you do not want to ask them, ask Justin, ask Brian, ask Olivia, ask Andrea, John Bousquet, ask Pam Bousquet. They know where all, they know. They know.

Let us consider this. Let us jump ahead. Old Testament model. Let us go to the New Testament model. Go with me if you would, 1 Corinthians 4. You want to be a man of God, you have responsibility in this church, you want to take a stand, you want to stand up for God? Very good. Proud of you. You better understand what you are getting into. You better not be timid. You better be very willing to know how it goes and to pay the price and to know what you have to deal with.

1 Corinthians 4:9-13

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

Paul goes on to say, "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you." There are a number of warnings in the Bible. This is one of them. If you are going to be a man of God, you better take heed to what God warns you of something. Now, you gentlemen, and all you men, but especially you gentlemen, who are going to be in responsible positions, who are going to be leaders, who to this point have some understanding about what is going on, I am

going to charge you right now. Understand where you are going. Understand there is a price. Understand what you have to deal with. If God has called you to do that, be man enough to deal with it. Be a man.

1 Corinthians 4:9. I know that all Christians, because pastors that get in the pulpit anymore, preach a flowery sermon to you about God's love and Jesus loves you and all these good things, and that is all true. But for the real man of God, we have this stupid, ridiculous conception because we do not understand where we came from. We do not understand that men have paid down through history for the price of the things of the Word of God. If you want to know the price some of these men paid for what you have today, go back and read Fox's Book of Martyrs. If you have not read it and you are going to be a leader in this day's world, you better go get it and read it. You better thank God to your lucky stars that you were born in this day and age and time. Because these men paid this book, what you get preached to, and this is why I tell you, do not ever take this for granted. Know what you have and cherish it. Know what God has given you. You better take hold of it and you better never let it go because you are going to have to stand to the judgments of the seat of Christ and we will get there and you are going to have to look at men who paid the price for this book in blood and their wives who paid for the price of this book in blood and their children who paid for the price of this book in blood. If you are going to be a man in this church and you are going to stand up and you are going to be a leader, you better know what you have to deal with. You better be a man big enough to stand up and deal with it. Because if you are not, you are useless to God. I am going to tell you that right now.

We are all sinners. We all have our weaknesses. Psalms 19 says that we all have secret faults and we all have presumptuous sins. God overlooks a whole bunch of that. God forgave all that. Do not let Satan beat you up with that. Be prepared to take a stand. But here is what you have got to deal with. You better be ready to deal with it. You better consider this before all this installation stuff takes place. You better be ready to deal with it. You better be ready to pay the price. Because if you want to be effective for God in this day and age, you know what the church that God gave? God gave a charge to all the churches in church history and we have dealt with some of this. But the charge that was given to the church that lay out of Laodicea, which is the time and the place that we deal with, was that God told them, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." You know that the Laodicean church is the only church in the history of the world that has not paid a price for the Word of God in the blood of their own lives? Nothing. You have got it. For those of you that have come in, God bless you. It is a wonderful, terrific thing. But you better understand what you have got. You better not take it lightly. You better hold on to it for all your worth. You better pray, God, that God loved you enough to bring you here, at this time, in this day, in this age, that you have men in this church that love God, that are willing to take a stand, and they stand behind their pastor. You have got a pastor who has given this pulpit that he will stand up here, that I trust you. That man has paid a price. You better stand up and support him if you are going to be a leader in this church. If you cannot do that, shame on you. I know most of you can, but you better understand. You better understand.

I am not Bob Alexander standing up here that you hear every week. I am somebody who has been around with him for a long time. He married me and my wife. It has been a few years ago. But you know what? He has paid a price. There are guys that have stood with him that they have paid a price. If you are going to take a stand for the Word of God, you are going to pay a price. You better be man enough to deal with it.

Here we go. 1 Corinthians 4:9. "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death." These guys dealt with the physical death. There have been people all the way down through history that have dealt with the physical death. At this point in time for taking a stand for the Word of God in the United States of America, which is the last place on the face of the earth left, you may not be faced with the physical death for taking the stand for the Word of God. I am telling you, look around because that day may not be around forever. There are those, and I am not going to preach you a political message, but there are those who everything that goes wrong with this country blames on a far right wing conspiracy. Guess who they are going to tell you who the far right wing is? They are going to be the Christian. Trust me, I know a little bit about history.

When the Word of God began to originally flourish, Rome was in power. Nero was the emperor of Rome. Nero was the vilest, cruelest, wickedest. Examples, one of them, the Bible says he was the wickedest, but Nero was pretty close, a vile individual. Rome was falling down around his ears. He needed somebody to blame Rome's problems on. The United States of America, which is the last bastion of free Christianity on the face of the earth, is falling down around our ears.

Romans 1:7, Paul addresses, and if you go back and check all the examples, and this is getting a little bit ahead, but this is where God brought it up, so here is where we are going to go. Paul addresses all the rest of the churches of the book, and some of you have heard this, some of you have not. But he addresses all the rest of the Old Testament to the churchmen, Paul's writings to the church to be at Thessalonica, to the church to be at Galatia, to the church to be at Ephesus, to a particular place. The book of Romans, which is the book of doctrine for the New Testament church, is addressed to "those that be in Rome." Now, for those of you that understand the language of the English, he did not say "at Rome." He did not give you a place. He gave you a destination. He did not put you in a specific place at a specific time. He said "those that be in Rome," you are there.

Rome has never gone away, ladies and gentlemen. Rome killed Jesus. Rome sought to destroy the Word of God. Rome is in power today. As Bob says, they hide that information in things called books. Just go read it a little bit. It is there. Understand where your government is today. Understand where you are at today. Understand if you are going to be a man of God, what you may have to deal with today, and that is the warning that I am going to give you from the Word of God.

Back to the book, 1 Corinthians 4:9-13.

For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are

honourable, but we are despised.

Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

"I write these things not to shame you, but as my beloved sons, I warn you." If you are going to be a leader, if you are going to be a man of God, Paul wrote to the church of Corinth of the state that he was in, that he went through so that they could be strong in the Word of God. If you are going to be a man of God, and you are going to take a stand for the Word of God, and you are going to accomplish something for the Word of God, do not think the world is going to love you. You are not going to be a popular guy. They are going to attack you. They are going to revile you. They are going to lie about you. The day may come where they seek to kill you and destroy you and throw you in jail. Are you man enough to deal with it? If you are not, if you are not, bow out now. It is coming. It will come. The charges given to the church will lay out to see it.

"Offscouring." Paul. There are two revelations in the Word of God. We just went through one, the book of Revelation. There is another revelation given in the New Testament. I am going to tell you where it is. You go find it. It is there. It is a little longer than just the book of Revelation. Paul. Paul revealed to the men so that they could be strong. To the church at Corinth, which was not a strong church doctrinally. Paul is giving them some warnings. That is why he gave them the warning. I know that we think that we are the strongest people on the face of the planet. But let us face it. We live in the Laodicean church age. Let us be realistic about look around. Here is where we are. There is nothing wrong with that. God put us here for a particular place, a particular time, for a particular purpose. I am just telling you, know where you are at.

"We are fools for Christ's sake. But you are wise in Christ's sake." If you are going to be a man of God, you have to become a wise fool. But you have to sell out. It does not mean be a fool. It means be a fool for Christ's sake. It is stupid. But know what you are trying to accomplish. Know where you want to go. Know what God has called you to do. Sell out for it. In that case, you better be willing to do whatever God tells you to do. Go wherever God tells you to go. Put up with whatever God tells you to put up with. Because Paul got it. If you go back and read Paul says, "I count all things as dung that I might gain Christ." Dung is a pretty good euphemism. Paul was a wise guy, a pretty nice guy. He knew what to say and when to say it. He knew how to use the language. But he knew how to get his point across. But he knew where he was going. He knew what God had called him to do. When God calls you to do something, He will lay it out for you. He will. He will not always tell you exactly what is going to happen because if He did, you would probably run and hide. But you better be a man. You better be a man. If God calls you to do something, you better be a man. I mean be a man. That means protect the women. That means be a man. Know what to deal with. Know how to deal with. Put on the whole armor of God. Ephesians 6. And deal with it. Paul did. Paul knew what he had to do. God showed him all the things he was going to have to go through. Paul counted it all but lost that he might gain Christ

because the things that you put up with in this world that you deal with, that you accomplish what God wants you to do. Go read Revelation 21-22. Go look at what the crowns are that you get. Go look at what you are going to be adorned with for all eternity. Put up with it. Deal with it. Get the job done. Are you going to stand naked before the judgment seat of Christ and you are going to have to give an account to all those people that did get it done, that did die, that did suffer all this stuff?

"Offscouring." Paul, a great man of God. You know what offscouring is? You women that clean know what offscouring is? You know, wash the toilets? You guys that have been janitors? All the gunk that goes down the drain of your sink? It is offscouring. Junk. That is how Paul, think Paul was a popular guy in the world? So the world looked at him. Deal with it. You want to know where you are at? You want to be a man of God? Deal with it. Put some steel in your backbone and be a man.

Some of us learn this different ways and different things. I can only relate to you how this helped me and how you need to deal with these things. All of you deal with it in different areas. Some of you know you want to deal with how to be a man and stand up for things. Do not whine about what the umpire does on Saturday night. Go be an umpire. Want to know how to deal with it? Go be an umpire. Everybody has to learn different things in different ways. I have to come out of this thing. For me, I love the game of football. I have loved the game of football since I was a little kid. In it to me, what are the legal ways you can go knock the soup out of somebody? Just knock him on his cheezer. Pow! It is illegal. It is fun. I started playing when I was a little kid. I was fortunate. I got to play all the way through college. I was good to me, although I was not a saved guy back then. But you know what? He deals with us all in different ways. Some of us He sent to the Army. Some of us He has put us in different positions in our job. I am dumb. He made me an official. I thought, this will be cool. I will put on a striped shirt. I will be important. I will go out. This will be fun. Boy, did I have a lot to learn. Put on a shirt. He is not going to make anybody happy. You are under scrutiny constantly. You always do the wrong thing. You are blind. One guy told me I stunk. I said, well, I do not really think so. I did shower before I came out here today.

Let me tell you what it does. Let me tell you what it does. I have dealt with this in different ways. Some of you had to go to the Army. Some of you had to just deal with certain things. Some of you, God, had to just pick you up and bat you around a little bit. But if you are going to be a man of God, you have to do two things. You have to know how to stand up for what is right. Because you have to know what the parameters of what you are dealing with are. You have to be able to make order out of chaos. You have to be willing to be an unpopular guy to accomplish that. If you are going to be a man that takes a stand of God. Official. You have to manage about your eighth thick, not quite as thick as this manual, but it is pretty thick. You have got to know it. Not only do you have to know it, you have to deal with making order out of chaos. You have got bodies flying around everywhere. They all want to cheat, trust me, because they all want an advantage. The world wants to cheat because the world wants an advantage, and it is chaos. You have got to make order out of it. Not only do you have to make order out of it, you have got to make order out of it right now. You have got to know the rule. You have to know exactly when

the rule applies. You have to know, God knows how many situations. You have to know exactly what applies. You have to know exactly when to take the yellow flag and make order out of the chaos. You do the same thing as a man of God. You do the same thing. The world is chaos. The world is in a mess. You are going to be a man of God? You have got the rulebook. You know what it is. You have got to be willing not to be a popular guy. You have got to take a stand, and you have got to make order out of chaos like that. Because if you do not, somebody is going to get killed in this war. In this game, somebody is going to die. Maybe not physically, but you are going to die spiritually. If you die spiritually and cause somebody else to die spiritually, you affect that guy's entire eternity. You are going to be a man of God? Know where you are at. Know where you came from. Know where you are going. "Being defamed, we entreat." Bear stand, be a man. They are going to beat you down. Know how to deal with it. Lift them up.

IV. Looking Ahead: The Power of the Gospel and the Church's Future

Because why? Because the end result is going a little bit in 1 Corinthians 4:15.

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

Preach to them. God saved. Dealt with them. Grew them up. "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." Better find out who you are following. Better know who you are following. Better know why you follow them. If it is the right guy and it is the right man and it is the guy God has called, you better hold on for dear life and follow them all the way to the end. Because that is where God puts you. Paul, "For this cause, I have sent unto you Timothy." He sent some of you, man. He sent you someone to disciple you. He sent you a preacher to get you saved. He sent somebody to disciple you to grow you up. "Who is my beloved son and faithful in the Lord? He shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ." There is another preacher. "Bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ as I teach you everywhere and every church. Now some are puffed up as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." Here we go. Here is the point. "For the kingdom of God is not in word." Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. You can turn on TV and get all kinds of talk. You can get all kinds of teachers. Better find you a preacher. "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." Do you have the power of God in your life? You want to be a preacher? You want to be a man of God? Do not talk it, walk it. Do not talk it, walk it. Be a man of God. Pay the price. Deal it up. "For the kingdom of God is not in word." It is not what you say, it is what you do. It is how you do it. It is in power. Not in word but in power.

Excuse me just a moment. I have some time. Look behind. Know where you came from. Know where you are at. Be willing to pay the price. Look around. Look behind. Now let us look ahead a little bit. Go with me to Romans 16 if you would. We will camp out there for the rest of the time. Romans 16. We are in Rome. For those that be in Rome. Ladies and gentlemen, we will be in Rome until we are raptured out and the Lord Jesus Christ comes back. That is where we will be. God wrote these things down. God singled some people out. God wrote some names down so you would have some examples of people who took a stand. For people who stood up. For people who were there.

In Matthew 12:36, just bear with me. You do not need to go there. This is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking. If He is saying something, it would be real wise to pay attention. He says, "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." I say that to say this. God does not write anything trivial down. If God gave you these examples down that I am going to go to in Romans 16, God did not do it idly. He gave them to you for a purpose.

Let us start in Romans 16:1.

Romans 16:1-4

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Paul says, "I commend unto you Phoebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church, which is at Cenchrea." He gives a specific place and he tells us what this specifically did. "That ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you, for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also." Now when Paul wrote this, Paul was in jail. The context before he is at can be found in Acts 28:16 to the end of the chapter. I am not going to read that to you, but go back and study it out after the message is over. It will give you the context before Paul was when this was written. But he mentions Phoebe. He mentions that she is a servant. He mentions, "give to her assistance in whatsoever business she had need of you, for she had been a succourer of many and of myself also."

Here is where the ladies come in. A succourer means, and you can go look it up in the dictionary, which is what I tell the kids at school to do, Mr. Hill with them, I mean God gave you a dictionary, go look it up. Know what the language says. Because if God did not put down an idle word, He wanted you to know what it was. A succourer is someone who helps someone in great time of strife or distress. Paul is in jail, I would say he is in some distress. From where he was, Rome eventually killed him. From what he preached, he was willing to take a stand, and he had some dear lady who was attending to his every need. Here is where the church comes in, because Paul told the church to assist her in whatever she needed. Example, model, someone who is living the Word of God, if you have got a dear kind lady who is in a household, who is assisting God's man, who is willing to stand up for God's man, it is the church's responsibility to whatever

situation is in to take care of her. It is a responsibility of the church, and a lot of churches have lost sight of this to this day and age. If you are going to be a man of God, understand. Understand where you are at, understand where you are going, understand what the responsibility is.

He goes on, it says, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus." You will notice, we will go on here, and I am going to read all these things to you, but he wrote all these people's names down. He did not just say, some people, he specifically named the people. That is here, the last chapter, or the last book, or the book on doctrine in the New Testament. God is trying to tell you something. He says, you know what the thing is? You take care of the things of God, and you take care of God's people, and you take care of God's man, God is going to write your name down somewhere, and it is going to be somewhere that is important. I cannot give anywhere more that is important than right here in the Word of God. The model is there, ladies and gentlemen. God will know who you are. God will give you your eternal reward. You have to be the servant here. Give it up here, or give it up there. Eternity is a long time. I can give up a few things here to get it there. If you want the shame of your nakedness to appear, I do not think I want to walk around for a thousand years dealing with all the people that had to be dealt with for this book, for the things of the Word of God. You get it right eventually, but I do not want to do it. I do not think any of you want to do it. Get it right. Get it right now.

Romans 16:3, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life," Paul's life, "laid down their own necks." 1 John 3. Are you willing to die? Give up your life for the brethren. I am just going to throw this out. John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We as Christians knock ourselves out for the unsaved world, and that is all fine and good. But you know how people of the world really, really want to know where the power of God is? "You know my disciples, by the love you have, one for another." You want to make an effect for the world of God? You have got Old Paths Baptist Church. You better love the people here, and you better love the people here more than you love the people of the world. That example is what will bring the people of the world here. "What have they got that I do not got?" This is garbage. You guys deal with it. We all deal with it. We deal with nonsense every day. Wherever we go, where we deal on our job, people are vile, man. So are we, but so are we. We just got something they do not got. So are we. Do not puff yourself up. There is nothing I write that is nothing I want. Do not get too carried away with the deal as a Christian. The only thing that separates you from men is the grace and the love of Christ. Do not get too carried away. Do not carry too puffed up with your own importance, because you get on serious territory if you do that. Another message, another time, another place.

"Who for my life hath laid down their own necks, and to whom not only I give thanks? But also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise, greet the church that is in their house." There was a place at a time where people, men in people's houses, believe it or not. Do not get so foolish to think that that could never happen. Do not get so foolish to think that that cannot happen. I pray to God it does not. I really do. But I have seen the day. Take it from this wise old, grumpy old man. I have seen the day when that was necessary. Cherish what you have, ladies and gentlemen. Hold on to it with all your might. Be thankful that God has brought you here. Stand up for the

man that God has put before you to preach the Word to you. Stand up for those that are teaching you the Word of God. You might want to go back and study 1 Corinthians 10 if you want to be a successful church. Better watch the divisions. Better be sure they do not exist. Better watch your mouth. Make sure it says the right things. We are all sinners. Know where you are at. Look around, look behind, look ahead. You go read it for yourself. I am not going to... That is another sermon I can go forever on that deal. Know what comes out of your mouth. You will be responsible for every idle word. We all make mistakes. We are all sinners. Do not beat yourself up. You know, you are going to slip. We all do. We all say things that we shouldn't. We all do it. We are all sinners. We are all vile. But I charge you, especially if you are going to be a man and a person of responsibility, and then you guys have been told this. I am not telling you anything you have not already been told. You have got to watch it. You have got to know what to say. You have got to know when to say it. Be careful. Be careful. Do not let Satan trip you up. Watch what you do when you disciple people. Let your speech be seasoned with salt. Just watch it because Satan gets in and tries to foul things up. Be careful. Know where you are at. Know what you are dealing with.

"Likewise, greet the churches in their house." Do not be so foolish to think that that might not happen someday. Hope to God that it does not. I pray to God, and you better pray too that it does not. But there was a case when it did, and we are in Rome. Be aware of what is going on.

Then he goes on. "Salute my well beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners." There are some people who were in jail with Paul. He said, "Salute them." They were in jail. They were not looked on very kindly by the powers that be. They are in Rome. They are in jail. Not a nice place to be. Paul said, "Look upon them. Salute them. My fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me." There is where they are at. There is where they are at in God's eyes. In the world's eyes, they are just the old jail bird. Careful. Know what your relationship is and hold on to it. Do not ever let it beat you up. Do not ever let it defeat you. Know where you stand. Know where you are. Do not let the devil destroy you and beat you up.

"Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you." That is what they stood for. That was their testimony. That is what Paul charged them to do. Paul wrote all their names down. God gave you a record. Be a servant.

Now Paul gives them a charge. Here is that word "beseech" again in Romans 16:17.

Romans 16:17

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

"Beseech" means I beg of you, I charge of you. I do not know how to explain it. You need to look it up. But "beseech" means that I exhort you. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Doctrine is critical. Doctrine is unbelievably important to where I exist as a church. Doctrine is no more than knowing what the Word of God teaches and how to apply it. But if you are going to be a leader, you better know doctrine. You better know how to deal with it. You better mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned. How do you learn doctrine? Study.

2 Timothy 2:15. "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Now I have gone blank. I have known this verse all my life. Now when I need to say it, I do not... Suppose you have an AARP moment every now and then. Do not believe me? Ask my wife. "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Thank you. What is the deal when you are in accurate line? "Study to show thyself approved unto God." Ladies and gentlemen, if you are going to be a leader, a man of God, you only need approval of one person. Pre-important person, but you need it. You only need God's approval. But you get God's approval by studying to show thyself approved. By studying means know the doctrine. Know what the Word says. In the context of what study says in that particular case, it means that a study is a complete exhaustive analysis of the subject matter at hand. That is what study means. A study means I know it inside out, frontwards, backwards, forwards, upside down, and in pink. Sorry, Jimmy. The Bible already got you for the pink, so... It means nothing. It is just a statement.

Fellows, if you are going to be leaders, you better study to show yourselves approved. Because God is going to hold you accountable. You better be approved unto God. Know who you seek your approval from, and your approval is not from men. It is from God. There is nothing wrong with seeking the approval of God's man, but you better know who God's man is. You better know how to deal with it. "A workman that needeth not to be ashamed." A workman is someone who is a skilled craftsman. It is a laborer, but in God's eyes it is a skilled craftsman. What you need to be as a man of God is a skilled craftsman. The temple of God, Old Testament, in Jerusalem, Old Testament there, took Solomon seven years to build it. You need to go back and read what Solomon built it with. He built it with the best. He had the best materials. He had the best craftsmen. He had the best of everything. He built it. The temple never went away, ladies and gentlemen.

I am going to close with this. Go with me to 1 Corinthians 6. God has taken this a little different direction than where I was brought it down on my outline, but that is what the Holy Spirit does. 1 Corinthians 6:19, all of you know what it is. I hope. Let us go through it for just a moment and we will close with that. "Wise master builder." "I study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Rightly divide it, know it. Build on it. Because you are to be a wise master builder, 1 Corinthians 3, gold, silver, precious stones, and where does that temple exist? Close here.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" There is a temple that is where it exists. It is in you. Better know how to build it. Better know how to array it. Better do it right. Why? "What you have of God given of that and you are not your own. For you have bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." I am not mine. If you are a man of God, you are not your own. You gave that up the day you got saved. God set His Son down, endured the shame of the cross. You better know what the cross meant because He endured the shame of the cross. He endured that. Ray sang about it today. There is power in the blood. But you know, there is a power. Answer me this. Does the power of God come from the cross? You are saved from there. Do you know where the power of God comes from? 1 Corinthians 15, it comes from the resurrection. Raised you up. Bought you with His blood. Raised you up. I am not mine. I am bought with the blood of Jesus Christ. You are not yours. You are bought with the blood of Jesus Christ. You better be a wise master builder. You better be willing to pay the price because Christ paid it for you. Men through death, through history, paid the price in blood. They died. They were tortured. Their kids were thrown from homes to eat. Understand it, ladies and gentlemen. Pray to God you do not have to deal with it. But you better take a stand. You better know where you are. You better look behind. You better look around. You better look ahead because people's lives depend upon it for all eternity. The victory of this church depends upon it for all eternity.

You have been given a great thing, ladies and gentlemen. You have been given a church. You have been given a man. You have been given a word. Do not ever, do not ever take that lightly. Do not you dare ever take that for granted. Do not you dare ever let my Lord have suffered in vain because you are not man enough or woman enough. Men, you better be willing to protect the doctrine of your own home. You are going to be a leader. You are going to be a man for God. You better protect that house. You better protect that wife. You better protect that family. You better know what you are dealing with. You better hold on to it. Ladies, you want to deal with it right and what is close to you. You better trust your husband. God put you in there. You make him be responsible. Let me tell you how it works. Do not study 1 Corinthians. You are covered with Christ. Christ covers the man. The man covers the wife. The man covers the house. You cover your family. You better not take it lightly. You better consider it. You better know what it is. You are going to be a leader in this church. You better not take it lightly at all.

Women, you want to learn how to make this church strong? Trust your husband. You have got a word to Word of God? You want the doctrine right? Men, you better know it. You better know it. Ladies, you better trust your husband. You have got a question? There is the guy you need to go with it. Doctrine, keep it pure. You keep it pure. Do not depend on this man to keep it pure. He will. But you are going to deal with your own house. You want this church to be strong. You want this church to turn the world upside down? You do it. You do it. Ladies, you have got a question in the Word of God? Go ask your husband. Husbands, you do not know the question.

You do not know the answer. You better find it out. You want to be a man of God? You better know it. You are responsible for that house. You are responsible for that church. You better know it. You want to be a deacon? You want to be an elder? You want to be a preacher? You better know it. You better know how to deal with it.

Now, men, your lady, wife comes in. I know I go. I have been around. I have dealt with it. I know how it goes. Believe me, my wife, the Bible answer man, she has got a lot of questions. But I will tell you what, she knows it. She knows it. A lot of you ladies know it. A lot of you men better get it. Why? Just go ask your husband. Make him responsible. Do not let him accountable. Ask him the question. He is supposed to know the doctrine. He is going to be a leader. You better know it. Now, men, if you do not know it, do not be a fool. Learn it. Study it. Holy Spirit, I have got to give you the answer. John 15, 14, 13, He will bring it all to remembrance. You study it, He will give you the answer when you need it. You better know it. You better study it. Do not take it for granted. Now, men, if you do not know it, here is how it works. Then go ask your pastor. I am not saying cut the pattern. You know, you cannot do that. Not good. You have been given the riches of a man who knows where God is far beyond. You will ever comprehend that you get the judgment seat of Christ. That is how it works. You better get it down. Because if you do not get it down, Satan will come in and chew it up, spit it out, kick you every which way but backwards. You want to be effective for God? That is the way it works, ladies and gentlemen. Look around. Look behind. Look ahead.

Let us pray. Father, I thank You.