

## Romans 6:18-23; Psalms 77:10-13     Sunday 11/16/2008

Last week, we started another key passage in Romans. I have been showing you, as we have been coming through the Book of Romans now for a number of months, how chapters 6, 7, and 8 are really the great doctrinal issues for us as believers. When we get into the Book of Romans, we are coming into a time period where basically the Old Testament, God dealing with the nation of Israel, and the Old Testament setup, has passed away. We are moving into the Church Age.

You find that everything is now suddenly changed. Where once it was focused on the nation of Israel and everything that they were doing, now suddenly it is focused on the church. The Apostle Paul comes on the scene, and he begins to establish New Testament local churches, just like ours, in various places all over the known world through his three missionary journeys. That is why when you come to chapters 6, 7, and 8, he really focuses on what we as Christians ought to believe. He focuses on the struggles that we have, and he is very open and very honest about it. It is something that we can all learn from.

You remember last time we started in chapter 6, verse 18, and it said this:

*Romans 6:18-23*

*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

*I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.*

*For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*

*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*

*But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Now, Father, we thank you and praise you for all that you do for us. Lord, as the song said, "You look beyond my sin and saw my need." Lord, that is so where we need to be today in our lives as Your children. Help me, Father, to take the Word of God and to lay it out more clearly and more effectively. May these, Your people, who are struggling to do what is right with You and want to learn all about You, may the Word of God come across clear today and in their hearts.

Lord, we will just ask You to forgive us for whatever we have done this week that we may not have confessed, that in the quietness of this moment we will look deep inside and will not hinder the Holy Spirit of God to teach us the doctrines that we need today by unconfessed sin. Even now, You will bring them back to our remembrance, and we will clean it up, Lord, that we might be able to do business with You today through the Spirit of God. Thank You, Father, for this

church. Thank You for the great men and women that make it happen and do all that needs to be done. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

## I. God Understands Our Weaknesses

You remember last time we talked about verse 19 in particular, and we talked about how God understands our weaknesses. I think that is probably the greatest concept that came out of last week's sermon. I am sure that there were other things that you got out of it, but for me, as I said last week, the greatest thing when we talked about Psalm chapter 78 was the fact that God understands our struggles.

I think sometimes we think that God is the kind of God who is just waiting around a corner to drop the hammer on us when we do something wrong. And yet, God is a God of all grace. God can drop the hammer, but you want to always realize that if you are saved this morning, God looks at you not as an adversary. He does not look at you as someone that hates Him. He looks at you as His child. Like any loving parent, He wants His child to grow up and be everything that that child has the potential to be. So, in the course of our Christian walk, He deals with us in those areas and brings to light those things that we need.

I showed you last week in Psalm 78 how the Bible gives that great verse where it says, in dealing with the nation of Israel—and again, we saw the great parallels between the two, how Israel as a nation so parallels our walk with God as individuals—He said to them, after all that God did for them, how they had kept forgetting God and going after other gods, and yet instead of God coming down and wiping out the nation of Israel, the Bible says that He remembered that they were but flesh. What a great passage that is.

## II. The Three Infirmities

We have been looking at every avenue, every concept, every combination of biblical principles to help you achieve that victorious Christian life. We are living in a day and age in Christianity where there is no question about it, Christians are defeated. There has never been a time when sin has probably run more rampant in the body of Christ to destroy. There are a lot of reasons for that, but my job and what I am trying to do is to help you get around those things through the consistency of your relationship with Christ and showing you how to really build the right kind of relationship.

We opened up this great study with a great passage here in verse 19 where it says, "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity." Remember what I told you? I told you that the Bible specifically lists three infirmities that we have, three things in our lives that are identified as problems. If you really want to start to fix your life and put your life where it needs to be, you start with where God clearly tells you we have issues. If I want to make my life more perfect for God and perfect myself in what God wants for me, as I should and as you should, where would I start? Wherever the Bible tells you there is a problem is where you start. You start always where God clearly defines and says, "This is what your problem is."

Each of us has individual issues. Maybe my individual issues are not yours, and yours are not mine. But the reality is, because we are human beings and we still are in the flesh, the bottom line is we all have some issues that affect all of us, and those issues will be the same. If you are ever going to get to the individual issues you have, you are going to have to target the main issues that God says you and I have.

Of course, talking about these three infirmities, you will remember that last week the first infirmity we talked about was the flesh, found in verse 19, and the struggles that we have. I have already showed you that dealing with the flesh is something that everybody struggles with. There is never going to be a person who gets saved that does not have some issues they have to struggle through. The real question is, will you deal with it? Will you take it to the Word of God? Will you let God help you with it?

We talked about the three aspects of how you do that:

1. You get to know who God is. You learn about God. You learn about Him in a way that introduces you to Him, that He in time becomes your closest friend and certainly your greatest ally.
2. The second thing we talked about was the fact that we have to reckon ourselves dead. What does that mean? It means that we use, as I used the example, dead reckoning. We focus on something. In my life, it is the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Focus on His coming. Focus on the promises.
3. From that point, you yield yourself. That was the third thing. What does that mean? It means you start doing something for God. So many of God's people go through their whole lives and never meaningfully do anything for the Lord. My job is to help you and to put things into your life and help you get these three things working in life. Basically, we came down to, you kill the flesh, but you fill the spirit. You kill the flesh, but you fill your spirit. You fill your spirit with the things of God.

I gave you a great verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 1, where it says:

*2 Corinthians 7:1*

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

By the principles of the Word of God, taking the Word of God into our lives and allowing it to do that.

### III. The Infirmity of Not Knowing How to Pray

Then we looked at our second infirmity, and our second infirmity we talked about was the fact that we do not know how to pray. That was found in Romans chapter 8, verse 26. Now, I told you last week, and I am going to remind you again this week, when we get into Romans chapter 8, we are going to really go through an intense, very detailed study of how to build an effectual prayer life.

Back in the bookstore, there are some great autobiographies of some men who did some tremendous things in their lives. I was looking at the book back there of Adoniram Judson. On the cover, it shows him walking up the gangplank of a ship. He left and went to the foreign field and had been gone for about 30, 40, 50 years of his life. Many times they were in situations where they had nothing, and all they had to rely on was the prayer chain that they had with God, between them and God. Boy, if you want to see how important prayer is, go back and read those men's lives. They are incredible. A lot of it, when you start to build relationships with God and you start to learn these things, obviously a lot of things that you learn are by other men and women who really developed their life, and God used them in a great way. You can always learn from that.

We talked about how, as a young Christian, we do not know how to pray, that most of us really do not understand how the concept of prayer works. But we also talked about how if you are a young Christian here today, God covers the bases for you. The process of your Christian life again is much like the nation of Israel. One of the things I found just kind of tucked back in there, when you start to study the nation of Israel, in Exodus, they go into Egypt. At the end of Genesis, everything is fine. Joseph is there, and he is running everything, and Jacob and all the folks are down there, and that is where God had brought them.

But then something happens, and what happens is it talks about in Exodus chapter 1 and 2, it says, "There arose a new king in Egypt who knew not Joseph." Immediately, we see the circumstances reversed. Immediately, now we begin to see where the persecution comes into the nation of Israel, and we begin to see how God, a little bit later on, fulfills His promise and He brings them out.

When He brings them out of Egypt, Egypt in your Bible is a picture of the world. When He brings them out of Egypt, it is a picture of you and me being delivered from this world the day you got saved. When you study that passage and if you kind of put a map to it, you will find that when God takes them out of Egypt, He kind of brings them around this way and brings them back around over here. It is a period of time before they ever have their first conflict and their first battle. Do you know why? I will tell you why. Because God wanted them to get their feet on the ground and get themselves spiritually grounded with Him before they met the first major battle in their life as a nation.

Do you know what that tells me? That tells me when you first get saved, or maybe you are a young Christian who is trying to figure all this thing out, God does the same thing with you. He takes you around the long way. He does not allow any real disasters to hit your world. He does not allow you to fall into a real battle until you are spiritually ready. He lets you dig in a little bit, learn some things before the first conflict comes. Why? When you go through the rest of Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy—while the word Numbers is named after the fact that they were numbered for war—you will find that they go through some tremendous battles and some tremendous conflicts, but not until they get themselves grounded with who they are with God.

It is the same way with you. You are a young Christian. You are somebody that is just trying to put it all together, and maybe you have been saved for 10, 15 years, but you just never really got plugged in. Here is the way God does it: God allows you some time before you have to meet the real opposition to kind of figure out where you are at and let us ground you here.

So, when it comes to praying, I want to tell you this: You may be a young Christian, and the Bible says we do not know how to pray as we ought, and that is true. But my point is this: In your life, God will allow you the grace and take care of you even though you and I do not know exactly what we are doing. Well, I do, but you get a pass. I do not. I would have liked to put me in that one, but I just cannot do that. But you get a pass. God works with you. He takes care of you in spite of your inability to understand exactly what everything is going on the right way in your life. That is just the way He does it because He is a compassionate God. He is a loving God, and He wants to take care of you and take care of me.

The older you get in the Lord, there comes a point in your life—you need to understand this too—that does not last forever. Israel got a pass from having to fight the enemy for a while, but it did not last forever. At some point in your life, if you are growing properly and you are getting the things of God in your life the way you should, then there is going to come a time in your life when you are going to enter into your first conflict. It is going to come a time in your life where you get into your first issue that you have to deal with. At that point, it will be a crossroads for you. You will decide that you are going to go to the next level, or you will decide you are not, and that will pretty much determine where you go with the Lord from that point on.

The longevity of any relationship, any long-term relationship, is a thing where husbands and wives kind of know what the other one is going to say. If you have been married for 40, 50 years, you probably can, if I would ask you about something that what your wife would say about this, you probably could say, "This is what she will say." There have been times that I have asked a wife, "Do you think your husband would...?" "Oh yeah, he will be glad to do that." "Do you think your husband would be okay?" "No, no, no, no, I know him, he will not do that." Do you know why you can answer for them like that, and most of the time you are accurate? Because you have lived with them so long. The relationship has been there for 20, 30, 40 years in some cases, that after all of that longevity of time, you pretty much know what that person is going to say.

Well, that is the way it ought to be with God. That is the way it ought to be with God. In time, in your life, as you build your relationship with God and you come to the point where you get to know what He thinks and how He responds to certain situations, you ought to be able to tell somebody what God thinks about it, just as you could go to my wife or even my kids, and they will say, "I am going to ask your dad about doing this," and my wife would say, "Well, I do not think you better ask him that. I do not think he is going to do that." Or my kids would say, "Oh yeah, he is not going to do that." Why? Because they have seen me in action, good and bad. They have seen the way I respond to things. They know pretty much where I am going and what I am going to do and what I think.

You and I ought to have the same relationship with God. You and I should be like this. We ought to play a game. We ought to play a game some Thursday night. We ought to play this game. The game is simply like this—and I would not put any new Christians in it because you are not maybe ready yet, unless you said, "I want a shot at it"—but we ought to play a game. It ought to be this: I will give you a problem, and in five seconds or less, you give me where you are going to go to answer the problem. Now, that is a good game, because that is the way it should work in your heart, in your life, all the time.

When you deal with people, the real key to helping people is when they tell you their problem, while they are telling you their problem, you formulate the answer from the Word of God. When you come over and see me, you start laying out your particular circumstance and your situation. You are saying, "Well, you know, I struggle with this, I struggle with that." While you are telling me, I am going systematically in my mind, cataloging where I am going to go to give you the answer to your problem. You are not going to be, "Well, this is Bob's homespun theology or his homemade recipe for your problem." I am going to take you where the Bible says, because I know how God thinks. I know what He is going to say about this particular issue. That is the way we should be with the Bible, and that is what should happen in your life as you continue to grow.

The Bible and the ministry is not about giving people our personal opinions. I care no more for your personal opinion about something than I do my own, and I will never give you one unless I quantify it and say, "Well, this is my personal opinion." But I will never just give you my personal opinion about where it is at in life. My job as the pastor is to give you God's opinion on it.

When it comes to prayer, the key is knowing what to ask and what not to ask. I did not get into this last week, nor am I going to get into it today, but we will when we get into Romans chapter 8. As a Christian, there are some things in prayer you have a right to ask God for, and as a Christian in prayer, there are some things you do not have a right to ask God for. You say, "How do you know the difference?" By knowing what He thinks, by being so close and intimate and building that relationship that in any given circumstance you say to yourself, "I know what God says about this. I do not have a right to ask that. I know what God says about this issue. I do have a right to pray about that or ask for that." And of course, that is the great key.

Remember last week I talked about the two women in the Bible, and I showed you the great one in Matthew chapter 15, and I gave you five aspects that you need to have and I need to have in prayer. Then I showed you five reasons why we do not get our prayers answered the way we think we should. That is just some great stuff that will begin to help you, and we will put it together as we get on further in the Book of Romans.

I could never underestimate the importance of prayer in a Christian's life, but unfortunately, in most cases—and this is a sad thing to say—our prayers never leave the room. Again, I put within that context all you young Christians who are trying to find their own way. But prayer is a lot like mailing a letter, and maybe this will help you understand what I am saying. If you sat down and you wrote a 10-page letter to somebody, and you wrote out there and you detailed everything in that letter to that person you wanted to say, and then you are going to mail it. So what do you

do? You fold the letter up, drive off to the post office, drop it in the mailbox. You did not put it in an envelope. You did not put an address on it. You did not put a stamp on it. You just simply wrote a letter, put in everything that you wanted to say, and then took it over to the mailbox, dropped it in, and you thought the post office working person would figure it all out and get it to where it was supposed to go. Is that going to happen? No.

When it comes to prayer, your prayer, my prayer, there is an envelope it needs to go in. There is a certain way it needs to be addressed, and there needs to be a stamp on it. There are some things that when you pray, you have to put that prayer in. Of course, most of God's people have no idea about that. If you would ask them to give you five verses on prayer in the Bible, to me the most important verse in the Bible on prayer is Romans 8:26. It says, "I do not know how to pray." See, that is my infirmity. So if I want to get with God, I do not know how important prayer is. Where am I going to go? I am going to learn everything I can about prayer.

When I say that, I say that in the case of young Christians, God takes care of you. God will do it. But as you get to a point in your life and you do not learn what is important to God, there comes a point where you just do not go any farther, and that is where you stay. Usually, you begin to take steps backwards.

#### IV. The Infirmity of Forgetting God

Those are the two things we talked about last week. We did not get through the third one, and I want to talk to you about the third one today, and we will complete this section. The third infirmity we have is found in Psalm 77, verse 10. Look at this. This is a great one, and probably this is probably the worst one we have. Now, this one I can definitely put myself into because we are all in this boat.

*Psalms 77:10-13*

*And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.*

*I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.*

*I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*

*Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?*

Without a doubt, going back, and I have told you before how the nation of Israel parallels where we are at, without a doubt, Israel's greatest problem, Israel's greatest single issue that I think led to every other problem they had, was the issue that they continually forgot God. I am telling you, without a doubt—and I can use myself as the number one example—and I am guaranteeing you, if it is my problem, it is your problem, and it is the problem of every child of God, and it is the problem that you are going to face every issue in your life. Our biggest issue is simply going to be forgetting what God has done for you and for me.

The Laodicean church, we know that we live in that time period. We know that there are seven periods in church history out of the Book of Revelation. We know that it starts with the early church in Ephesus there, and then runs up through all of the church period right up to the time

that we live in, and we are living in Laodicea. We also know that the word Laodicea means "rights of the people," "justice for the people." We also know that our biggest problem today is the fact that we want what we believe belongs to us, and we forget about God's rights. We are a church that is totally focused on itself today, and because of that, we as God's people are always totally focused on ourselves today.

Simply put, my biggest problem, my biggest infirmity—and I guarantee it is going to be yours because you say, "Well, it is not," but I am not done yet, by the time I am done, you will understand why it is—is forgetting what God has done for you.

## V. Forgetting National and Historical Foundations

In the ministry, people never remember what you did for them. They only remember what you did not do for them. Some of you guys are going to be in the ministry, some of your wives are going to be in the ministry, and you are going to find this a true statement. When it comes to the ministry, you better get one thing straight in your mind: You better continually remember why you are doing what you are doing. You better never forget that aspect. You better always remember and understand exactly why you are doing what you are doing, because if you are doing it just for people, I guarantee you, you are going to be sadly heartbroken, because people traditionally never remember what you did for them. They only remember what you did not do for them.

We find this all the way through Christianity. Do you really know what is wrong with America today? We just finished the elections last week, and we have talked a lot about John McCain and Obama and the political system and how it is messed up, on whatever side you fall on, and all of those things. But do you really know what is wrong with this country? I am going to show you the bottom line of what is wrong with this country. The thing that is wrong with this country, and its bottom line—this is not a political statement, this is a biblical statement, because I do not care politically one way or the other—but if you really want to know what is wrong with this country, this country has forgotten some things. It really has.

We just celebrated a couple of days ago, November 11th, Veterans Day. I bet you there are not two people in this room this morning that could tell me what Veterans Day represents, when it got started, why it got started. It is just, if you are a government worker, it is another holiday you get off. And yet, Veterans Day is probably the reason why you are not speaking German this morning or Japanese, depending which way you want to look at it.

Memorial Day. "Oh, I know what that means! That is our big picnic with all the ribs you can eat!" I am sure some of you think that is how it got started, that they tasted my ribs and then said, "Let's make a national holiday out of it!" Well, I have got to tell you, my ribs are probably worth a national holiday, but that is not how it happened. We have forgotten what this country was built on.

We have two political groups in our country: one is called a Republican, and one is called a Democrat. And yet, we do not even understand what the difference is between a republic and a democracy. And yet, how can you be a child of God and not understand how those things fit into

your world, into my world? We forget. We forget. We forget what our founding fathers wanted to do when they established this country.

I bet, take George Washington out of the picture, I bet the average young person here this morning—and I will give you 25 down, whatever—I bet the average young person in this city could not name five founding fathers and tell you just a little bit about them. Maybe none of you could. Do you know what that tells me? That tells me the real problem is that we have forgotten. We have forgotten some things.

Do you know what we forgot? I will tell you what we forgot. We forgot that when John Adams asked Thomas Jefferson to write the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, he did. And when he brought it back to the founding fathers and they took a look at it, do you know what they said? They said, "This will never work because there is only one mention of God in the Declaration of Independence. We can never as a nation," this is what they said, "we can never as a nation forget the hand of God that it played in the formulation and the foundation of this nation being formed." And John Adams sent it back to Thomas Jefferson and said, "Clean it up a little bit." And the final form that they all agreed on did not have one mention of God, but it had four mentions of God.

Does anybody here know the four mentions of what it deals with with God in your Bible? No. Do you know why? Because we have forgotten. We have forgotten as a nation where we were founded, that the founding fathers were telling everybody today to keep God out of government, and they were saying, "There is not enough God in government." We have forgotten that.

This is not some material you get back there where it says, "The Baptist idea of what a country should be." You could go to any public library in this city and get the material I am getting. Somebody, I preached this message one time, and somebody came up and said, "Wow, where did you get that?" And I said, "It is a conspiracy! They hide that kind of stuff in books!"

When Thomas Jefferson brought the final draft, he made one reference to God as supreme lawmaker. Do you know why? Because they understood that the laws of God in a republic were what formed that republic. There was a reference to God as Creator. It was not God as an intelligent design. It was not God as some kind of theistic evolution. It is spelled out very clearly, God as Creator. Why? Because they believed that God was the Creator.

There was a reference in it, the third reference, was to God as a supreme judge. Do you know why? Because they understood that there was going to be a great white throne judgment. The lawmakers back there, saved and unsaved, realized to a greater degree than almost every saved person on this planet today that there was a coming judgment. And as a leader in this country, as someone who took the part of the people who made the laws and governed this land that was designed by God, that they were going to be held accountable in a day of judgment. Boy, we have forgotten that one.

Then there was the fourth petition found in there, and that was God as our divine protector, that through the divine providence of God, God would protect, and we would look to Him because of what He had already done and what He was going to do. Ladies and gentlemen, that took place a

little over 226 years ago. Not a long time by European standards. We think in America that when you go up to Boston or you go out to the Eastern Seaboard someplace, you will find a church that has a little sign out there that says, "This church was established in 1789," and you think, "Wow, that is some real history, American history."

European history is so... you will go over into Europe, and you will go into some churches that were built in the ninth century. I mean, you will go into some cathedrals that are in a constant state of renovation because they were built 1500 years ago, 1200 years ago, 1000 years ago, 800 years ago. That is some history. It just goes to show that it does not take us very long to forget. We have forgotten these things as a nation. This is why our nation is where it is at today. This is why our leadership is where it is at today, and this is why America is paying the price for what it believes.

We talk a lot about separation of church and state. Let me show you the fallacy of that. First of all, is there anybody here today that knows the understanding of where the separation of church and state really started? It started with a group of Baptists from Danbury, Connecticut, and they had a thing where they had an issue that they had heard a rumor. They heard a rumor that the government was going to establish an official church religion in the United States through the Anglican Church. So the Danbury Baptists wrote Thomas Jefferson, and they asked him—they still have the letter—and Thomas Jefferson wrote them back and said, "No, that is not going to happen. That America will always, when it comes to a church state religion, America will always practice a separation of church and state." It was not church and state as far as you cannot have anything in the state that has to do with God. It was church and a church state religion. We have forgotten that.

Do you know the fallacy of that? A couple of weeks ago, we had voting day. We all voted. Do you know what you saw? A violation of separation of church and state. You see, you cannot put the Ten Commandments in a courthouse, but you can have a political voting booth in a church. Now, if separation of church and state is what it is, how do you get away with that? I will tell you how you get away with it: when you are in charge, you do whatever you want to do. And of course, that is what we are up against. We have forgotten these things.

Anybody want to raise your hand today and talk to me about the Northwest Ordinance? You see, the Northwest Ordinance was an ordinance put into effect by Franklin, George Washington, and James Madison. Do you know what the Northwest Ordinance was? It was an ordinance that was put into effect in the early part of this country when states were territories that were going to be formed into states. And the Northwest Ordinance was put into effect that said this: You could not, as a territory, you could not become a legitimate state of the United States unless you honored the Northwest Ordinance, which was put out by those three men, founding fathers, which simply said, "You have to teach the Word of God in the public school system." We have forgotten that.

Has anybody ever read George Washington's Farewell Address? Well, if you are a certain age, up until 1940, that probably does not cover anybody here, but up to 1940, it was curriculum in every public school system in the United States of America. George Washington, our first president, when he went out of office, his Farewell Address, do you know what he did? He listed 12 points,

12 points that he was telling to the future Americans—that is why he was taught in the public school system—12 points that he wanted to pass on that we better never forget if we want to stay the great country we were. Four of them had to do with God and the Bible in your life and in this country. We forgot those things. We are the most forgetful people. 226 some years, and it is gone, every memory of what those founding fathers really wanted.

Most people do not even know that the founding fathers were influenced by two of the greatest preachers that ever preached the Word of God: Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. Two of the greatest preachers of the Eastern Seaboard that really began what we know in church history as the First Great Awakening, how that under the preaching of Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, that literally shaped the country. Every founding father, whether he was saved or whether he was lost, was influenced in a great way by the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield.

Ben Franklin, by the way, who was an unsaved man, never trusted Christ as his own personal Savior. He was a deist. George Washington was a deist. He was not a saved man. Do you know what a deist is? A deist is someone who does not believe that Jesus Christ is very God. Many of the founding fathers were not Christian in the sense of biblical Christianity, but there was an impact of the Word of God and the power of God in this country that unsaved people believed it and feared God more than saved people do today. Do you know why? Because we have forgotten.

I used to go up to Boston in that area, and I was stationed there when I was in the army for a while, and I really enjoyed that area. I love that area, so much history in that area. I had read in one of my studies, when I did about a 10-12 year study on church history and related it to where we are all at in this thing, I remember reading a book that said that George Whitefield on Boston Commons preached on one day, and 30,000 people had come to Christ. In that book, it had mentioned that there was a plaque on the Boston Commons that was where he stood in that place.

Well, I was going up to Boston on a yearly basis. I was preaching at several churches up there. I was doing a segmented study on church history. I would go in on a Sunday morning and start, and I would preach Sunday morning, Sunday night. I would tell the church, the pastor would tell the church, that "Bob is going to come in, he is going to lay this out for us, so we are going to reschedule everything. We are going to take two hours every night, give him all the freedom." And from Sunday to Wednesday, I would lay out church history for that church.

One time up there, it took me about three times to find it. The first time I went by myself, I wanted to find that plaque, and I searched high and low. Second time, I thought, "Well, I will enlist the help of the parks department." So I got me a ranger. The ranger was a stranger when it came to understanding where this thing was. Finally, there was an old man in the church that said, "Oh, I know where it was. I will pick you up tomorrow morning and show it to you." And boy, he took me right to the spot, and there under the grass, with just a little brass plaque about that big, you had to peel the grass away to look at it, and on that plaque it said, "On this spot in 1770, whatever it was, George Whitefield preached and 30,000 people accepted Christ."

I just wanted to stay there for a while. I thought to myself, "If no other place in the world I have ever been, I know that God has been here." And I just wanted to stay there for a little while and be where the Spirit of God was so powerful that when one man preached, 30,000 people came to Christ.

Ben Franklin, as I said, was an unsaved man. He was so influenced by George Whitefield. Do you know what he said? He said, "I never put any money in my pocket when I went to hear George Whitefield preach." He says, "Because inadvertently, when they passed the plate, I would put every dime I had in my pocket in." He said one night, "I backed off clearly one mile from the open-air meeting, one mile, and I could hear every word of his message clearly." Incredible power that those men had. They changed and shaped the form. We have forgotten that. We have forgotten where this country was founded and where it has come from, and that is why we are the way we are today, and that is why we are the mess that we are in.

We have forgotten that on Thursday, June 28, 1787, before we ever had agreed on a Constitution, before we had ever agreed on a Declaration of Independence, Congress again had come to a standstill, just like today. They were fighting between the parties. There was bickering going on of what it should say and what it should not say, and it had absolutely stalled the process, and it looked like this country probably was not going to go any farther.

Then on that great day, Ben Franklin, now at this particular point in his life, he was 81 years of old age, and he was in very poor health, and he was still an unsaved man. He probably gave his most stirring political address of his political career because on that day he stood before a bickering Congress who was trying to get their own agendas, and everybody wanted. And they had in that early day, they had forgotten where they had just been a short time ago. And Ben Franklin, an unsaved man, stood before that Congress on that day, and he said simply this: "You men have forgotten that 13 years ago where we were and the struggle we were in, and it looked like that the British were going to take Washington, and we are all going to be hanged as spies and rebels and tyrants." And he says, "You have forgotten that on that day in our darkest hour, we all fell on our knees and asked God for the guidance that we needed to have."

Do you know what Congress did? They shut down for the next three days, and they went from church to church to church to church and had the pastor and said simply to him, "Preach to us, put us on fire, and get us back to God." And after three days, the revival broke out, and they went back in Congress. You have the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution that we have today because of things like that. We have forgotten that.

On just another quick note here, do you know what is wrong with Bible Christianity today? We have forgotten. We have forgotten who we are in Christ Jesus. We have forgotten what we believe. We have forgotten why we believe it. There are people who come to this church and look at this church, and people who, and you have them in your own, and people that you have brought here before, or in some cases your moms and your dads, when they see you come to church here, and you hear it all the time, I have heard it all my life, "Why, you are involved in a cult!" The bottom line is this: The reason why we hear that so much today is because we have forgotten what the true church is supposed to believe.

Do you know who Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards were? I believe exactly what they believed. I teach exactly what they taught. Do you know who Billy Sunday was? Do you know who J. Frank Norris was? Do you know who D.L. Moody was? Do you know who Mother Kyle Ham was? Do you know who all those great preachers were? Well, this church stands on exactly what they taught. Do you know why you get that? Because you do not know what the real deal looks like. You have forgotten. We have forgotten. We do not know what the truth is anymore. We use those things as a cloak to get what we want done, but we have forgotten who we are. We have forgotten what we believe. We have forgotten why we believe it. We have forgotten how God has protected us and brought us to where we are at today as Christians.

You could not take a map and run back through history and show a true line that you could ever keep from getting some false teaching and follow it right through. That is why that chart is up there. You can follow that chart, and we are right on that chart where every Bible-believing, Bible-ordained, everybody who ever held the Word of God where it is, we believe today exactly what they believed in 1900, 1800, 1700, right back to where it goes. You see, we have lost our roots.

Listen, 95% of my ministry is not teaching you something new. 95% of my ministry is reminding you of things you have forgotten. Do you know what our infirmity is, me and you individually, as a child of God? Do you know what our problem is, why we struggle with things? I will tell you why: because we have forgotten what God has done for us individually. God's people today are the most unthankful people in all the world: selfish, self-centered, unforgiving, worldly, spoiled, the biggest bunch of misfits you have ever seen in your life. Why is it, ladies and gentlemen, we as Christians today, why is it that we always insist on focusing on what we do not have instead of looking at what we do have? So we have forgotten.

We have forgotten that the Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 6, verse 6, that "godliness with contentment is great gain." For a number of years, when I first came to Kansas City, I worked as a youth pastor with Truman Dollar. Truman Dollar was one of... I think he is one of the three men in my life that really formed and shaped my aspect of the ministry. I used to spend time, and I would get to drive him different places when he spoke down to Springfield, and he would ask me to drive him down there, and I had some great in-depth conversations with him to find out what he really thought, because he was a man who represented Christianity in the 70s and the 80s, and he was a bright and upcoming star in the fellowship. I wanted to learn everything I could.

I remember one time we had a particular issue in the church back there, and I did not know all the ramifications of it, but he just started to talk to me, and I could tell he was frustrated. In a conversation, it came about, and then he looked over to me and he says, "Bob," he says, "remember this. I know you are young," and he says, "you have got a great future, but I want you to remember this: People are never going to remember what you did for them yesterday. They are always going to want to know what you are going to do for them today." Do you know what? When he said that, I honestly did not really understand what he said. But you know what? That was probably 30, 30 some years ago. I know exactly what he is talking about now.

With that same thing, let me just say this: I have a lot of faults. I know that. But let me tell you one fault that I do not have, if I can tell you one, and I do not have—I have plenty that I will not tell you about—but let me tell you one I do not have, and that is ingratitude. I want you to know that I will never come to the place in my life that I will think that this church is what it is because of me. Never. Never.

I know that some of you love this church. I know that some of you love this ministry. Yes, I know that some of you love me. I know when there is ever a dirty job to be done that some of you are the first in and the last out. I know that whatever I do that tries to make this thing an outreach, that you are there with me and you help me, and I can count on you. Whatever there is a dirty job to be done, it is not because of me. It is because you love God, you love this church, and you understand what it takes to make this thing work. I have got a lot of faults, but ingratitude is not one of them.

I want you to know, someday at the judgment seat of Christ, someday at the judgment seat of Christ, you are going to stand there, and you are going to be where you, all through this, you were the behind-the-scenes. You see, you look at me up here, and I teach Sunday morning, and I teach Thursday night, and I am the one that everybody gets focused on, and I am the one that solves your problem for the most part, and all that. So there is a tendency to think that this place could not run without me. And the bottom line, the truth, is that is just not true. That is just not true.

I know that someday I will be gone, and someday that if Jesus does not come, I will no longer be able to pastor this church. I understand that somebody here will take that church over, and I understand that the church will... nobody can be a Bible examiner, thank God for that. There is only one of me. But it will redefine itself. It will refocus itself. It will move right on, and it will never end. Do you know why? Because it is not my church. It is God's church. The real important part of this work is not me. It is you.

I never think for a minute that it is me. I never think for a second that it is something that I have or something that I do. I am just part of it that God has put here. God has built it around my personality, built it around the way that I am. But you know what? God, when I die, if Christ has not come, He can lift that thing out, put somebody else inside of that. The church will just reform itself around that, and because the absolute principles are the same, it will just move right on down the line.

Some of you have stood through this church through thick and thin. You have figured out that this church is in its mission. You have declared in your life that this is God's work, and you are going to build yourself into it, and you have. You have. You see, I cannot claim that. I get paid for what I do. Here is a great passage in Luke chapter 17, verse 9: A servant does not get reward for what he is supposed to do. I get paid for this. You do not. You do it because you have figured out that it is God's program. It is God's passion, and you have put yourself in it.

I do not kid myself for a second when I look at all that goes on around here and all the things behind the scenes that need to be done. When I put on an activity, and have to do something, we want to outreach to this or do this or do that, it is never a doubt in my mind, never a doubt in my

mind, never a doubt in my mind that this work would not exist and could not go on without some of you, many of you, who realize what this work is and realize that it is not mine, it is not yours, it is God's. We are just the stewards of it. But I want you to know, I will never take you for granted. I will never not appreciate what you do. I also want you to know, I know what you do and where you do it and what you do for this church. I know what you do. I know when there is something being done out there and an activity being done and you are there. I know that when something has to happen and you cover the bases, you got it done. I know that when you work with people, how you go that extra mile and how you... you know what? There are certain things in your life that you just basically, you do not schedule. You schedule, you do not schedule your life around church. You schedule church around your life. I appreciate that. But we have forgotten some things.

Now in this passage in Psalm 77, look at verse 10. He lists three things not to forget in your life and my life with the child of God. These are the three things that we have to focus on because this is exactly what we forget.

> 1.) *Remember the Years*

*He says in verse 10, "Remember the years." Do you know what that is dealing with? Do you know what every Christian has to remember? We need to remember what it was like before God saved us. Now, I am not one who likes to dwell on the past, and I do not think anybody needs to drag up all the glorification of what their sin was. I mean, there is a time and place for all that. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about, remember the years. Remember what it was like when you were unsaved. Remember all the years without God. Remember the difference that He made when He came into your life, and now you look back and remember the contrast from darkness into light. You remember back then the things that you thought were important, and now after four or five years of being saved, the things that are important.*

It is funny that time has a way of misfiguring things. We get fixed in our mind. I will meet somebody that I have not seen for 15, 20 years, and in my mind, I remember them the way they were the last time I saw them. And then I look at them, and they are 15, 20 years older, and I think, "Who is that?" I will say, "Oh, this must be a dad." "Oh no, it is him."

A couple of years ago, I went back to my home, 1451 Old Avenue. Nobody else lives in it now. My mom moved down the road, and I went up there, and it was for sale. So I went in there, and I asked the woman who came to the door, I said, "You know what? I was born and raised in this house." And I said, "I have been out of it." I said, "Would you mind, I know you have got it for sale, I would not ask this, but would you mind, before you sell it, could I just go through and remind myself what it was?" And she said, "Oh sure, come in." Do you know what the first thing that struck me? How small it was. Because in my mind, I remembered being at Cosmo Hall. We went upstairs in the bathroom, we had to walk in this way. It was tidy. I walked into my dad's bedroom, which became my bedroom, and I thought to myself, "How in the world did I ever get all my junk in here?" I look in the other bedroom, we only had a two-bedroom house, everybody had kind of sleeping shifts. It was just, it was small. I walked out in the backyard. When I was a kid, it was hundreds of acres. Now, just 20 feet. We forget, don't we?

The first time I went to my mom's house, after years of being out here and going back home, and she had put my senior picture up on the wall with my sisters on one side, me on the other. I remember walking in there and coming in there, and I had not seen my senior picture for like 20 years, and I am certainly a senior now, but not senior picture in the same way. I remember walking in there and I thought to myself, "Who in the world is that? That is me! Man, I was good looking!" And I thought to myself, "Who is that? Who is that?" We forget what we look like. Do you know why? Because we get fixed in our mind the way things are. That is what we do. Time has a way of changing things.

Do you know what else we forget? We forget how the world treated us before we got saved. Yeah, we go to a point because we forget the day, forget that we do not remember the years. We forget how it was. We forget how it was before we got saved. Israel again had the same problem. Have you ever read over there in Numbers chapter 11, verse 4-5? They are out of Egypt now, and they have been coming down the road here, and they are probably out, I do not know, maybe a year or two, and now they are out on the backside of the desert. God has supernaturally brought them through out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and now is supernaturally feeding them with manna and quail from heaven. He has provided everything that they need.

In this particular passage here in Numbers chapter 11, verse 4-5, you see exactly the problem you and I have. They have forgotten what it was like in Egypt. To me, it is one of the greatest passages and statements in the Bible, the way you and I look at things. They are talking about the fact that, first of all, "All we have to eat is this old dry manna." They say, "We remember the days in Egypt when we used to eat the fish and the cucumbers and the melons and the onions and the garlic freely." Freely? You were slaves! Your grandfather was crushed by one of those big rocks they were moving. You had the scars on your back. You starved to death. You slept out in the rain. You slept out in the mud. And then you had a taskmaster. They whipped your back. You worked 24/7. You never got a day off. You worked till you died. Freely? Ah, we forget, don't we?

We forget what the world does. We forget what the world does to us. They are building the pyramids for 24/7. You and I are in a world system that wants to destroy us, making bricks and then having to keep a certain tally, and when you do not do it right, they take away the straw and make you keep the same tally and then punish you if you do not. They make you slave labor, work to your death, starvation, cruel taskmasters, whips and scourges. That is the world. See, enslaving us into a slave-like atmosphere that has one purpose: work you 24/7 by the world system and then leave you dead in the road when it is done with you. We forget.

Do you know why I am never going back to the world? Not saying I will do everything right, but I can guarantee you I will not go back to that world system. Do you know why? Because I remember the years. I remember what it was like. We have forgotten.

> 2.) *Remember Thy Works*

*The first thing he says there, we need to remember the years. Then the second thing he says in verse 10, we need to "remember thy works." Do you know the greatest work in your life, in my life, was the finished work of Christ on Calvary's cross? Where "remember the years" is a picture of the time before you were saved, remembering that, do you know what "remembering*

*the works" is about? It is remembering the day God saved you. Remember the day God delivered you. Remember how happy you were. Remember how the first day you got saved, and you went out that door, you had not learned to keep your mouth shut. You told everybody. Remember the first time you got saved when God delivered you, those early days, those early... nothing could stop you. You had the joy, joy, joy, joy down in your heart. Your eyes sparkled, your cheeks flushed. I mean, you were so excited. You would never be late for this, never be late for that. Boy, you would not miss a thing. You were always there because you knew what God had done in a great change in your life.*

*What happened? I will tell you what happened. We have forgotten. Why are God's people who are saved and on their way to heaven so indifferent to God at this point in their life? How did you lose the joy, the passion of serving God? Now it is a labor where once you could not wait to do it. Where once He was first, now we work Him in around our busy schedules, and we wonder why our life has so many problems. Listen, His death on the cross, my friend, is the key to everything. Remember the works, the finished work of Christ. Remember the price that was paid.*

*Young Christians, and I tell you this, and I see it, young Christians, when you get saved, and I see it in this church, and it is a good thing, but you have got to understand it. As a young Christian, you get saved, you have got a lot of emotion, you have got a lot of excitement, but the downside is you do not have any depth to you. You do not have any roots down yet. Or you got saved, and you got a weight off your shoulders of a thousand pounds, and you feel better, and you are in a place now where everybody loves you, and you can grow, and you can really go and do what God wants you to do, and you feel the burden, as all the songs say, "Burdens were lifted at Calvary." You know, and you have got a new life, a new beginning, a new creature in Christ Jesus, and you are excited about it. But the problem is, you have got to change that emotion, and through the process of putting the Word of God in your life, you have got to turn that emotion into passion.*

*There is a difference between emotion and passion. Emotion has no direction; it is just emotion. Passion has a purpose. Passion has a perspective. Passion has a direction. When you understand that, when you got saved, oh, you go get your new Bible, you get you this, you get you that. You line up with all the books. You are going to know it. You are so excited. You read it every day. You praise. And then after a while, after a while, it kind of loses its excitement. Where after a while, you would not miss Thursday night if your life depended on it as a young Christian. After a while, "Oh well, I have got this tonight," or "I have got to do this." Oh, after a while, "Well, I cannot be there this Sunday because I have got to go do this or that, and I could do it later, but you know what? I need to do it ahead and do it." And all the emotion begins to fade, and because there was no stabilizing in the Word of God, no principles that you took that emotion and developed it into passion, that is the problem. Do you know why that is? We do not keep in our hearts and our minds the day God saved us, and the crucifixion just becomes like Easter, Christmas, and your birthday. We forget the price that was paid.*

*Grounded in truth. I told you this a couple of Thursday nights ago: When you really want to understand the price that was paid for you on Calvary's cross, you do not go to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John give you the skeleton outline of the crucifixion.*

*Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John basically give you the historical perspective. Oh, it is a tremendous, moving passage when you just read it. But if you really want to understand, if you never want to forget what happened the day God's work finished for you and for me, you do not get it out of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You go back to Job. You go back to Isaiah. You go back to Zechariah. You go back to Jeremiah. You go back to the Book of Psalms. I guarantee for you, my friend, every moment from when He stands before Pilate right up to the time when He dies on that cross and He pays the ultimate price is recorded for you and for me from hour to hour, almost minute to minute, when they lifted Him up, when they put the nails in His hands and His feet, when they laughed at Him, when they made fun and shot dice for His garment. Every aspect is recorded, showing you not just what happened to Him, but what He was thinking on the cross of Calvary as He hung there and paid the price. Ladies and gentlemen, whether you know it or not, He had your name on His lips.*

*That is one of the most personal aspects in our discipleship lesson. I think it is lesson three, isn't it? No, maybe lesson two. We talk about the ordinances. Two ordinances in your Bible. One of them is the Lord's Supper, the other one is baptism. When we explain that, at least when I explain it, I take that concept of Lord's Supper and I show that in the Bible, the biblical way it is done is the way we do it here. There are two aspects to it. There is the difference between the Lord's Supper and then there is communion. It looks like in the early church there in the Book of Corinthians that they all met together first for a meal, and they sat down and they ate together. And then after they had that meal together, the fellowship meal, which is called the Lord's Supper, based on the Last Supper they had up there in the room, they have that meal together with everybody together. And then it looks like that from that point they move into what we call the communion.*

*Now the word communion means togetherness. It means a oneness. And what happens is this, and I tell people this when I disciple them. I tell them that, and this was the process: They all were to come together and eat together because, do you know why? Because you know, we all get in a good mood after we get a good meal. That is human nature. I can be in the foulest mood in the world and sit down and have a nice meal and feel good about it, and I do not care what you do. You can do whatever you want to do. I am happy now because we are that carnal. Nothing is really changed except my fat gut got some more food in it, and it is your thing now where you are happy because your flesh is satisfied. But God understands that before you get to the communion side, there needs to be a time of fellowship with other believers. So what do they do? God uses human nature. They get together and they have a meal. They sit around and they talk. They get some of Grandma's fried chicken, some Aunt Betsy's baked beans, and you get some of this, and you get so-and-so's apple pie, and you get it all down there. We all eat, and we are all sitting around, and you know, suddenly we start feeling good about everything.*

*Then the Lord's Spirit says, "Okay, well what about so-and-so over here?" "Oh yeah." And so what you do is you start feeling good. You get a full belly, and you get everything going, and then you start getting tied into, "Boy, this is a great, boy, this is a great place God has given us. I just love everybody. Oh, I love this." And God said, "You love that person over there." "Well, you kind of love that person." But God said, "Well, you better love everybody." And so, you know what*

*you do? You go over and you say, "You know what? I am really, you know what? This is such a great time. I did not mean to..." "I am not going to shake my hand." "Oh, thank you. I am sorry everything I said about you. You forgive me?" "Dun-dun. Ding-dong. Dun-dun." "Okay, good." Is that what you do? And now you start saying, "Oh, and I have got so-and-so over here. You know what? I am sure I ran. I was the one that ran over your dog and just kept on going. I am sorry about that." You know what? And you get it right? You get in a fellowship attitude. You thank God for what you have got there.*

*And then, you know what you do? You do that together. You do that together. That happens as a church. But then you move into the communion part, and when you go into that part, you cannot go as a group. Oh, you will, but you go one by one. Oh, we are all sitting here in a group, but you commune with God between you and God. It is between you and Him. Do you know why you can have the meal and have everybody together and enjoy that, but when it comes to the communion, it has got to be between you and Him? You and Him, because He died on a cross, it was between you and Him. That is why me and Him. He wants you to look at that death on a cross and like the only person He was thinking about on that cross was you.*

*Churches get into a lot of fights about things. You know, I would like to see a good fight in the church over somebody saying, "Well, He died for me," and across the aisle saying, "No, He died for me!" And then you two just knock down, drag out right here in front of everybody over who He really died for. The truth of the matter is, I would not break it up. Do you know why? Because they are both right. He died for you and could not care less about her from your perspective. He died for you. Did not care less about her from your perspective. Now you want some bad news? He died for me and did not care either one about you. And everybody in this room ought to look at the death of Christ on the cross just that way. Do you know why you do not? Do you know why you forget? Because you do not look at it that way. That is why it is a historical event to you. That is all it is. Remember the works. Remember the day God saved you. Your relationship with God should be greater today than the day you got saved. What happened? I will tell you what happened. You forgot. You forgot.*

*Only one way, only one way to keep that from happening, and that is to remember every day of your life the work that God put in your life, the work, the day He died for you on that cross. And you go back to those Old Testament passages, and you understand, you see it. It becomes something that you identify with, something you cannot even get through without breaking down and weeping in your heart because of the fact that you understand the work.*

*> 3.) Remember Thy Wonders*

*Then the last thing, verse 10 again, "remember thy wonders." You see, we have got to remember the years that before you got saved. You have got to remember the work, that is the day God saved you. Then you have got to always remember the wonders, that is what God is doing in your life since you got saved. That is what He is doing in your life, the miracles that God has done in your life.*

*To me, the greatest book in the Bible from a personal standpoint in my relationship with God, of showing me the whole big picture, the greatest book in the Bible to me is the Book of Esther.*

*There are only two books in the Bible—I do not know if you know this or not—there are only two books in the Bible that when you find them, the name of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit of God is not mentioned in any way, shape, or form. Only two. Everything else, you have got the Lord Jesus. There are only two books in your Bible where you find absolutely no mention of God, Christ, Jesus Christ, the Lord God, Lord, Holy Spirit, not a thing. One of them is the Book of Esther.*

*Do you know why that book is such an important book to me? Because there are times in my life, just like there is going to be times in your life, when you are going to go through something or something is going to befall you that is going to get real dark and real black and real bleak, and you are going to have a tendency to think that God has got so many billions of people that you got lost in the shuffle someplace. And yet, when you read the Book of Esther, you will find a book where God is not mentioned one place, one time, in any way, shape, or form. You will find a situation that is seemingly out of control, and yet you will find behind the scenes God is orchestrating every event from behind the scenes. That is a great comfort to me because I want you to know that the orchestration and the organization of God behind the scenes of your life is always going on.*

*You see, we focus so many times on what we see instead of focusing on what we know. There will be times that I look out there and I do not see anything, and that has a tendency to shake you up unless you focus on what you already know for sure. That is what I mean about the Bible impregnating your heart to the degree that you have such a relationship with that book that when darkness comes, when tough times come, when things happen in your life, when your life goes upside down, it is not about the event. It is about the One that is orchestrating the events in your life.*

*That is why I tell you young men for ministry, and I lay it out to you all the time, that the thing that you have to constantly do is look around, look behind, and look ahead in every aspect of your life. When I look back, I see the hand of God in my life, and I will tell you what, it is the absolute wonder that He has done to get me here where I am at in my life today. You know, I look at how many times He spared my life even before I was saved. I look back at the goofy situations I put myself in before I was saved where I could have been snuffed out and killed just like that. I look at the goofy things that we have all done and I have done in my life, and how that God has spared my life from disaster because it is just a stupid thing that I said, "I will do this, I can do that. Oh yeah, that is only 2,000 feet high, I can do it." And you know what? God could have had to do was take His hand off for one second.*

*I think of how many times He has used me, and if there is anybody that is unworthy to be used to preach the Bible, it is me. It is me. I do not understand why God chose me. Being a pastor, without a doubt, to me, this is why I do not deserve it. Being a pastor is the greatest calling on this planet. It is better than any kingship. It is better than any presidency. It is better than anything. There is no money that can buy it. Being a pastor is the greatest privilege and the greatest calling on planet Earth. I understand why God put me into it. That is not where I was headed in my life. If I had kept on my life the way I was going, I would have been dead by now. I*

*guarantee you, I would have been in some war somewhere, someplace, and would have got one right between the eyes. But God in His hand.*

*I look back and I see how my course was going back then, what I wanted to do, make a career out of the military, do what I wanted to do. And God reached His hand down and said, "I have got another plan for you." At the time, I was upset about it because I wanted to be a career soldier. At the time, I wanted to give my life to it, but you know what? And I was upset and mad. Here I was during the mid-Vietnam War, everybody else wanted to get out, could not. I wanted to stay in, could not stay in. I was mad. But I look back on it now, and I understand His wonders. I see what He did.*

*I think of how many times He has given me the courage to stand for right. How many times He has given me the courage when I was scared to death to stay in the fight. I remember the wonders. Let me ask you a question: Do you have a list? Do you have a list, even say five years or more, do you have a list of the wonders that He has done for you that got you where you are at today?*

*I remember an airport in Chicago 20 some years ago, maybe longer than that. I was flying from Kansas City to Mount Pleasant. A friend of mine's church, he had me up to preach, and I was going to kick off that night. He had a big thing going, a big banquet going, and it was just a big thing. I left that morning and flew, had to go through Chicago. Well, my flight in Kansas City was delayed, and then when you get to Chicago, the plane was on time, but my many planes were delayed. And now this flight that was going to get me to Mount Pleasant, it was going to leave like at four o'clock and get in at 5:30. I had to preach at seven. You were going to be picking up at the airport and getting me to go. You got more people when they got seats on the plane.*

*I walked up to the gate, and the woman said, "You know, Mr. Alexander, I am sorry, we just do not have a seat for you. We just do not have a seat for you." And I said, "Well," I said, "when is the next flight? Are you going to put another plane out here?" She said, "Well, here is the next flight, it is 7:30, gets in at 8:30." Well, I said, "Well, that is not going to do any good. I have got a speaking engagement at seven o'clock. I was just going to have enough time." She said, "I am really sorry, Mr. Alexander. I do not have anything." Now everybody else down the line who had appointments were throwing a fit. One guy was cussing her out. No, I am kidding. One lady was mad, going to sue the airline.*

*Do you know what I did? I got me one of them hot dogs with a lot of sauerkraut on it. It only happens in Chicago. You know what I am talking about. I walked away and I said, "Okay." And she said, "We have got a standby list here. Would you... we will put you on the list." And I said, "That is fine." And they take the list by how you come and check in. So she says, "I will put you on the list." And I said, "That is fine." So I walk away from the thing there, and here is my attitude, and I will be honest with you, I wish I could always have this attitude in life. I do not. I do not want to stand up here and pretend that I am, you know, that I always react this way. As soon as I show you this one, I am going to show you how I react in other situations, and you know, you can make a good contrast.*

*I walked away from the gate that day and I said, "Well, Lord, you know what? Hey, you know, I want to preach. You know, I am prepared to preach. You know, I have got the message that he needs, and you know, You put me into this scenario. Now I am ready. I have no control over this airline. I have no control over this nice lady who everybody is giving a tough time to. You know, I have done my job. You, I got a phone call, 'Can you come?' 'Yes, I can.' 'Will you do this?' 'Yes, I will.' I prepared myself, and now here I am in Chicago. Now I have done my part, You better do Yours. But I am going to go get me a hot dog, and probably two." I went down to that thing, got me a hot dog, too. Sat down there and ate my hot dog. I can still hear people screaming and yelling up there. Guy was throwing his ticket down like that and shaking his fist.*

*I went back up. The plane was going to leave in an hour. I sat down in there and just said, "Hey, you know what? I guess you will figure it out when I do not get off the plane over there." They boarded the plane, closed the door. About two minutes later, the door opened back up. The lady that I was nice to and talked to came out with a lady behind her, and she says, "Mr. Alexander," she says, "this lady here and her boy were going to get on this flight, and we miscalculated, and instead of having two seats, one for her and a boy, we only have one seat, and she does not want to go and leave her boy. I am not going to send her boy, so we have a seat available now. Would you like to get on the plane?" I said, "Yes, sir. Yes, ma'am. I will. Thank you." I walked down that aisle and said, "Thank You, Lord. That second hot dog did it!" I know that is what it was. I remember things like that.*

*I remember one time we were in Brazil. I remember one time we were in Brazil. So you know I am not lying, Steve was there. We were down there trying to work with this pastor to get the King James Bible into Brazil, and they did not like it, and all the Bible scholars down there thought they were going to put an end to it. So 22 Bible scholars challenged me to a debate in front of everybody in a big auditorium holding about 2,000 people. And they, and the pastor came up and he asked me, he said, "Would you, would you, would you debate them? 14, 15, 20 some guys by myself?" I said, "Why, sure." Hung up the phone. I said, "Why would I just say 'sure' for? What is wrong with me?" You know what I said? "Hey, God, it is Your book. I am not going to defend it. I said, I have studied it. I have laid it out. I know where I am at. I know what I believe. That is all I am going to get up and tell them."*

*Well, we went down there. Had a whole week. They were pushing it every Sunday night, talking about it. "Big debate this Sunday! Come and see Bible examiner going to take these guys on! We are going to find out what the King James Bible and the correct acceptance of the right text." And I have got to be honest with you, as I got close to that thing, I thought to myself, "You know, I should have went to Bermuda. It would have been a great time to go to Bermuda." Well, God said, "Hey, look, you shoot your mouth off all the time, and you know, and you tell everybody back in your place, you know where you are at. Just shoot your mouth off here and tell everybody here."*

*So we go that Sunday, Saturday morning. He was there. We go that Saturday morning, and the pastor was there, Finini, Dr. Finini, Pastor Finini was there, and he comes up all flush-faced, and he is all upset and mad at all mad at him. And I said, "And what is the deal?" And he says, "Well," he says, "these guys did not show up." And he said, "I have got all these people out here*

now that they want to hear about this and hear about that, and nobody showed up. So what I have got to do? I have got to stand up and take the time and preach what a King James Bible, the Word of God, and the text receptors, Word of God." Okay. I never forget those things. Never forget those things. Do I deserve that? Absolutely not. You know, I had to be right now, I had to be in hell screaming my lungs out for just a touch of somebody to put water to my tongue. That is where I deserve to be. That is where I deserve to be. I do not deserve to be here, but I will never forget the fact that He put me here. I will remember what He did to get me here.

Remember the wonders. I remember the men that God put in my life to teach me the Bible. Some of them are dead now. Some of them are already dead. They will all be dead probably in 10 years if Jesus does not come. I remember the time they spent with me and took time. Let me ask goofy questions. Put up with my stupidity. Put up with my emotional, you know, great ideas that I had, and just put up with me. Put up with me. Put up with me. Put up. Do you know why? Because evidently they saw something in me that was worth putting up with. I never forget what they have done in my life. I am not one that is ingratitude toward what somebody does for me. Somebody invests their life in me and honestly and openly helps me and puts me this. I will never forget it. I will never forget because I have learned that the key, the problem we have, is forgetting. We forget. We forget. We forget the wonders.

Do you have a list? I had a young man that went into the ministry a number of years ago, and I look at guys like him, and so many times I see the same thing in so many of you. He had come along in my ministry, and he had grown. He was ready to step out. He was going to take a church, and he was a good kid. He came in to see me the day before his ordination, and he was moving another place, and he was, you know, he came in and he said to me, he says, "Bobby," he says, "I said, I have got to talk to my father in the Lord." And I said, "Go ahead, buddy, what is up?" He says, "I am scared to death. I am leaving my family. I am leaving my job. I am leaving my home." He says, "I am going out here. I am going to do this." He says, "It is all new." He said, "He says, I just have got to be honest with you, I am scared to death. I am excited, but I am absolutely scared to death."

And I looked at him and I said, "You know what?" I said, "Here is how you deal with that: Remember the wonders. Remember the years. Remember the work." I said, "I remember the first day you came in here five years ago, six years ago. You not only did not know anything, you were so stupid you did not suspect anything. And I watched how God molded you and made you, brought you where He brought you. I watched God put this in your life and put that in your life. I watched you grow here. I remember when you preached the first sermon. I remember when that fire in your eye when you first figured things out on the Word of God." I said, "Now you are here. You are standing on a day when God is going to launch you out, and it is absolutely 100% okay for you to be scared. But here is what you have got to take with you: God did not bring you this far to drop you tomorrow. He brought you this far to finish it tomorrow."

All the devil will try to get you to fear, and we will forget in a moment of panic what He has done, that it was Him that brought me here. It was Him that got you here. It was Him that got you where He wanted, and now He is going to take you up the next level. Admittedly, it is a scary stairwell unless you take with you and remember the wonders, the years, and the work.

*I see that in so many of you. I see in so many of you that you focus on the struggles that you are going through. You focus on the defeats and the issues that you have to confront every day in your life. But I see what you do not see yet. I see that God is through those things molding you and bringing you and getting you where you want to go because God can only get you to greater things. Hey, do you not all have a T-shirt by Gold's Gym that says, "No pain, no gain"? What in life do you have to do that is not associated with pain? If you gain whatever you have got to go through in life to get where you want to go, there are sacrifices that have to be. There is pain involved with it, but the process is you always focus on what God is doing in life.*

*I say it again, this church is God's church. It is as New Testament pure as I can make it. God uses this church in many ways. For some of you, it is a new beginning. For others, it is your last stop. But that is just where it is. God will bring you to a place where you have to face the issues that keep you from going all the way and deal with them by seeing what He has done in your life and then moving through the next one, or you will stay where you are at. You will not go through it, and you will just pretend that He is using you, and you just go through that mode all the way to your life.*

*Remember the wonders of the church. Some of you young men and some of you, and I, you know, if you notice as I preach, I will just drop a little thing here, a little thing there, that is probably a key to ministry that you want to jot down someplace. I do not know if you do or you do not, but I kind of end up my message with little things that are so true. If you are ever going to stand and be a leader in ministry and be a pastor of a church, the ministry is people, but in the ministry, to keep yourself positive and keep yourself focused, you never focus on people. You just cannot. We are all flesh. We are all weak. We are all going to fail. You are going to let me down. I am going to let you down. People who are your friends today will be your enemies tomorrow. In the ministry, you can never focus on people, but you always focus on the wonders that God does in your life because the people will fail. I will fail. The wonders never fail. You have to in the ministry, you have to focus on what God is doing with you, what He is doing with others. People change, but the wonders never change. As the great verse says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?"*

*Now look at verse 12, and we are finished here.*

*Psalms 77:12*

*I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.*

*Do you know what the litmus test is for any church? The litmus test of any church, it is also true of Christians, the litmus test of any church, of any Christian, is what that church talks about. You are either going to talk about what God is doing or what so-and-so is doing. How easy it is. The reason why we get into the mode that we get in is because God is not doing anything in our lives, so we have to talk about something else, somebody else, instead of what God is doing and the wonders that He is doing in our lives.*

*Do you notice what it says there? Have you ever noticed what families talk about? Well, it says also, "of all thy works and talk of thy doings." What does your family talk about around a table*

*when you sit down and eat at night? When you kind of recap the day, are you... you wonder why our kids come out so negative? Because we sit around and we blast everybody, or this person or that person. We talk about this, talk about that, because we have nothing to say that is constructive of what the wonder that God is doing in our lives. Incredible.*

### *The Sanctuary of the Heart*

*Then verse 13, and here it is, and I leave you with this. He says in verse 12, "I will meditate also of all thy works and talk of thy doings."*

### *Psalms 77:13*

*Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?*

*Now look at that: "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary." Now in the Old Testament, the sanctuary was within the Holy of Holies, the tabernacle that they carried throughout the nation of Israel's journey for those 40 years. Within that tabernacle was the sanctuary. The sanctuary was where the Holy of Holies was. The sanctuary was a place that only one man went in. All the other priests could work out here in the area of the tabernacle, but when it came to going into the Holy of Holies, in the sanctuary, only one man could go in.*

*Now that is a picture of what in the New Testament, of where you and I are at with the Lord. Where in the Old Testament the sanctuary was a physical place that one priest went in, in the New Testament, the sanctuary is my heart and your heart. It is the most holy place in our lives. This is like when we talked about communion. We can all sit around and have the Lord's Supper, but when it comes to communion, only you can go in because it is right between you and Him. And when you take the Word of God and you take the wonders, the works, and the years, and put those things, they have got to go in the sanctuary. When you talk about them, he says, "Oh, that that way, O God, is in the sanctuary." That is your heart. And we know that the Bible says that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. We say what is really in our hearts.*

*Because when you have the things in your heart that you remember the years, you remember the work, you remember the wonders, you will never forget what God did. And forgetting, forgetting is the third infirmity, and it is the worst problem we have got because there are so many things out there, so many sparkly, shiny things, so many glittery relationships, so many things that give us the impression that it is much more important than the things of God. And actually, my friend, all of those things will just dull your senses that you too will forget. Yes, you will forget the years before He saved you, and then you will want to go back to the world. You will forget the work that He did on Calvary's cross, and because you do not understand what He did for you, it will translate down in every aspect of your life. And then, yes, you will forget the wonders. You will focus on what you do not have and not look at all that God has given you that you do have. And that is really the key.*

*Every head bowed and every eye closed now. I am going to be finished in just a moment.*