

Romans 2:11-16

Sunday 4/27/2008

SEC: Wrath Against the Day of Wrath

There has been no other nation in the history of the world that has been more abused, more ridiculed, and more tried to be wiped off the face of this planet than the nation of Israel. We know why that is: it is because they are God's chosen people, and the devil hates them as a nation. We know that. But it also happens because they have rejected God and are pretty much doing their own thing.

So we talked about wrath against the day of wrath. For the nation of Israel, that means they go through all the tough times in history, and then they are faced with the day of wrath, which for them is the Tribulation period. The Bible says the Tribulation period is the coming period of time in which God unleashes all of His wrath on this earth after you and I, as a church, are taken out. The Bible says that Israel is going to go through that terrible time, and they have to go through that so that they admit where they are with God and get right with God. It is the Tribulation that brings them back to God.

Then we looked at wrath against the day of wrath for an unsaved man or an unsaved woman. An unsaved man's life, an unsaved woman's life, is a dead-end street. It is a life that has no hope in it; it is a life that has no future in it. Though you may win a lottery and have a million dollars, at the end of the day, you are going to die and spend an eternity in a lake of fire. That is a tragic thing, but that is so true about how life is when you are dealing with people.

Many unsaved people get themselves into all kinds of scenarios: drugs, alcohol, bad relationships. It is just one unending problem after another. What happens is that their life becomes so unfulfilling. The suicide rate around the world, and even in America, is unprecedented. People just cannot take life anymore. People go through the issues; they get themselves so balled up into problems and heartaches, bad relationships, financial problems, and everything that goes on. Finally, they come to the place in their life and say, "I am done. I cannot do it anymore."

The problem with that is, it is like a man told me one time—he was an unsaved man—he told me, "I think I am just going to end my life. I am going to kill myself and end it all." I told him, "I have some news for you. You may kill yourself, but you are not going to end it all. When you kill yourself, you just start it all. It just transfers someplace else, eternal, and of course, the lake of fire." You go your whole life with all kinds of problems, wrath against the day of wrath, and then you die and spend eternity in hell.

Then for a Christian, we looked at the wrath against the day of wrath as far as you and I are concerned. We have problems in our lives as a Christian for one reason: it is because we violate biblical principles in our lives. I told you last week, we ended the sermon last week on the story about trying to fix your dryer or your washer with a handbook from the microwave or the dishwasher, whatever it was. I told you how ludicrous that was to think that I can pick up a book that deals with my microwave and then take that owner's manual and try to fix my washing machine when it is on the blink.

Of course, this is what we do as Christians. We get saved, we trust Christ as our personal Savior, then we try to run our lives by another standard other than the Bible that God never intended for it to run. I asked you this morning, before we started, if you did not have a Bible, that we would give you one. I always love giving Bibles away because it is like giving owner's manuals to yourself. Every problem you have, every problem you struggle with, I do not care what it is, everything you are going through in your life or have gone through in your life, the Bible has the ability to fix it if you do it the right way.

Of course, that is what the whole thing is about. The wrath and the day of wrath for a Christian is the fact that you go through the struggles and everything that you go through in your life as a Christian, and then you will wind up at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the reality all sets in. It becomes a very bad time when you realize all the rewards that you have lost. So we have talked about it in that aspect. It helps you maybe get a better perspective of where you are at because, in this room, we only have three groups of people.

1. If you are a Jew here this morning, and you are not a Gentile, then you are in that category.
2. If you are an unsaved man or an unsaved woman, you are in that category.
3. If you are a Christian today, you are in that category.

All of this pertains to you and to me and the way we are in our own relationship with the Word of God.

I. Defining True Riches and God's Attributes

We defined and looked at in verse 4 last week, the true riches. We found that the true riches of God is what God gives us: the forbearance of God. God is willing to forbear with us. When God should kill us, when God should just wipe us off the planet, God does not because He forbears. He goes along with the things that we do because the end result is God is not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance.

We talked about the longsuffering of God, how God suffers long. That is even more than patience. It is suffering with someone, going through what they are going through, because you know that at the end of the day, that person is worth going through it. When you get into the ministry, it is a situation where that has to be part of your mindset or your lifestyle because people come in with all kinds of issues. Many of them are not a quick fix. What it takes to work through people's lives is not only patience, but it also takes longsuffering, suffering long, understanding that people have to work through. It always takes you longer to get out of a problem you got into than it takes for you to get into it. It is just that simple.

Then we looked at the goodness of God, and we saw how all these things lead us to Christ if we follow the light that God has given us.

II. God's Impartiality and the Law

Today we are going to move on. Now that we have a little reference of where we were last week, let us move on and read Romans chapter 2. Pick it up in verse 11 and come down through some more verses here.

Romans 2:11-16

For there is no respect of persons with God.

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You for those that have made their way here today to hear Your Word. We thank You for each and every visitor that we have, and how You brought each one here. We just pray, Father, that You will give us a good time today in Your Word. We love You. We are a church that loves You and loves each other because of our love for You. We love the Word of God. We are a church, Lord, that loves to talk about the things of God, loves to enjoy the things of God, and let that be the prominence in our life today as we look at these great principles. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

When you read that passage like that, there is a great example of how complicated Romans is to read. I told you when we started the book of Romans that Romans is almost like a legal document. In fact, it really is. I call the book of Romans the Constitution of Christianity. If you have ever had to try to read it in scope, if you have ever had to read a Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States, you know how complicated it is. If you have ever had to get a lawyer and he put a legal document in front of you for you to read, or even a will, it looks so complicated. It is written in a form that a legal mind is the only one that can really understand it. You basically pay a lawyer not for doing what he does for you, but you pay him for making you understand what was written in front of you, so that you do not sign something in which you are in trouble. This is the book of Romans.

You are going to see as we break it down today, and I show you how we pretty much take it verse by verse and explain these verses, you get an understanding of how it works. To me, Romans is probably the greatest book in the New Testament as far as my daily walk as a Christian and helping me understand why things are the way they are.

Look at Romans 2:11 for a moment. We are going to kind of work down through these. What Paul is saying here is simply this: when it comes to a person's sin, whether you are Jew or

Gentile, when it comes to dealing with man's conscience, as in the Gentile, or the law, as in a Jew, as in salvation, as God dealing with you and me, all men are equal before God.

We have the bad idea in America, and it is written into our Constitution and in the preamble of our Constitution and Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal. We have some inalienable rights that it talks about. Of course, that is simply not true. That sounds really good, and I understand why our founding fathers put it in; I am not criticizing it. They were trying to set up a government by which all people were going to be equal. But as Dr. Phil says, "How is that working for you?" It did not work very well. Look at the problems we have today. The reason for that is that that may sound good, but it is like a lot of things that we get in our mind: it sounds really good, but it just does not work.

All men are not created equal. We know that from the aspect that when you study the Gentiles versus the Jew, God discriminated against the Gentiles when He made the nation of Israel the great nation that they were and gave them all the things that He gave them that He did not give the Gentiles. All men are not created equal in that sense. Then you find people that when they are at birth are not created equal. You find some people that are born deformed; they are not equal with people who were born normal. You find people who were born with mental problems; they are not the same as ones that are born without mental problems. All men are not created equal in that sense.

Let me tell you where all men and women are created equal in the biblical sense. This is what you need to understand. There is one way that we are all created equal, male and female, Jew or Gentile. It does not matter what category you put yourself in. That is the fact that we are created with an old sin nature. In that sense, we are all the same. We like to pretend maybe that we are better than somebody else and that we do not have the problem. But let us just be honest with each other today: we all have an old sin nature. That is where we are created equal. That is why when God deals, when He is saying in Romans 2:11, when God deals with man, whether he is a Jew or a Gentile, God looks at all men as equal, equal in the sense that they all need a Savior. There was no man, no woman ever born to planet earth after the fall of Adam that did not need a Savior. In that sense, we are created equal. We all have an old sin nature. We are all headed for the lake of fire. God's Son is the only One in His death on the cross that can save us. So in that sense, that is what He is talking about.

III. God's Law Written on Hearts and Stone

Look at Romans 2:12:

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

That sounds really confusing, but let me make it easy for you. Romans 2:12 simply says this: the fact that when he says, "for as many as have sinned without the law," that would be the Gentiles, the fact that one group of people has no written law, which the Gentiles do not, and the Jews have a written law, it does not make one any better than the other. Of course, we learned why that

is when we opened up and started studying chapter 1. We did not get into it in a great way because we knew we were going to get into it here in chapter 2.

But I showed you, if you remember back in our first couple of lessons there in chapter 1, I showed you why that is, because the Gentiles, maybe they do not have the law written on like the nation of Israel did in a document law, but God deals with them through the law written on their hearts. Of course, we talked about that in Romans 2:15 at that point, and talked about:

Romans 2:15

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

The Jews have the Word of God written in tables of stone. Exodus 24:12

And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them. The Gentiles have the Word of God written on the fleshy tables of their hearts. 2

Corinthians 3:3

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. That is how it works. That is what he is saying here. In these passages, he is showing us that God is no respecter of persons. If a Gentile does not have the written law, God is going to judge him out of the law that is written in his heart. If a Jew has the law written on the tables of stone, then God is going to use that to judge him. When it comes to the judgment of God, God is going to use the law in either case, and therefore God deals with them the same. We also saw in chapter 1 that basically we talked about this, that God deals with the Gentiles in two ways. We saw in Romans 1:19-20 that God shows the Gentiles the things that were made. Romans 1:19-20

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: We also know, as I have already said, from Romans 2:15, that God deals with the Gentile through his conscience. He wrote the Word of God on the tables of his heart and then uses his conscience to be able to deal with that. I did not get into this when we studied it, because, like I said, I was waiting here, but there are two great examples of that in the Bible that you need to mark in your Bible. You need to put it down along this passage here, but you need to see it. The first one is found back there in Genesis chapter 20. It runs the whole chapter; I think there are 18 verses in that chapter. It is the story of when Abraham goes down to Gerar, which is a city, a town. When he goes down into that city, the king there, his name is Abimelech. This is not the same Abimelech that is in Judges chapter 9; this is a different Abimelech. Abraham goes down into that city and is afraid because his wife was a good-looking woman. He was afraid that if he told them that this is my wife, they would kill him and then take his wife. So he plays it safe. Abraham is not at the place yet in his life; he is still in the process where he is learning to trust God. So Abraham lied. Well, he really only tells a half-lie. She was his half-sister; she was not his full sister. Anyway, he goes down there and he says to Abimelech and everybody, "Sarah is

my sister." He does not want to get killed. So what happened is Abimelech sees her, and he says, "That is what I am talking about. She is a good-looking lady." So he brings her in to be one of his wives. Here is a classic example. He brings her in to be one of his wives. He goes to sleep that night, and God meets him in a dream. God says in that dream, "Hey, that is another man's wife. You touch her and I will kill you." It is incredible. Abimelech wakes up, or he has this conversation with the Lord. In the conversation, you are going to find that this man has no Bible. Abimelech has no Bible. There is no law written at this period of time. He has no prophet that is coming to him and telling him. The only man that is connected with God that could give him any light on God has just lied to him and says, "She is my sister," because he is afraid. But you find that when he comes down through here in a dream, the Bible says that God deals with him in Genesis 20:5-6 on his heart. In fact, they have a conversation. Abimelech says, "You know the integrity of my heart." God says, "I know the integrity of your heart." God dealt with him on the basis of the law that was written in him. He did not have to say to Abimelech, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Abimelech knew it was wrong to take another man's wife once he recognized it was another man's wife. When you see that, you begin to understand that this is how God operates in the Old Testament. Abimelech knows who God is. He talks to Him. This is a Gentile king who does not have, who has his own world, has his own religions. He does not worship God in any way, shape, or form, but he knows the true God when He shows up, and he gives Him the honor and the respect because he has that law written on his heart. Incredible, incredible story. Then you find another one in Jeremiah chapter 40. This is a good one. Jeremiah 40:1-3. You come down through there, you will find that here is where Jeremiah has been in chains and had been in prison, and the captain of the guard comes down and he lets him loose. He basically says to him down there in Jeremiah 40:2, and this is a great passage here, he says to him, "The Lord thy God." That is a telling statement. First of all, he says "the Lord," so he recognizes God for who He was, but then he says "the Lord thy God." He recognized the Lord, but it was not his God. It was Jeremiah's God, but it was not him. If He would have been his God, he would have said, "The Lord our God," or "The Lord my God." He did not say that. You have to pay attention to every word in the Bible. He said "the Lord," giving Him His address as Jehovah. "The Lord thy God is going to whack this place." Here is an unsaved man who has no knowledge. Obviously, God is not his God, but he recognizes who God is. He says to him, "Your God is God. I know why all this stuff is happening around here. Your God is going to whack this place." Then he goes on to say, when he comes on down through here in Jeremiah 40:4, "And you know what? I am going to let you go and I am going to give you whatever you need." So he had some understanding of the great principle back in the early part of Genesis. It says, "I will bless those that bless thee and curse those that curse thee." So here is a case where an unsaved man who is just a captain of the guard, a jailer, if you would, he is recognizing who God is, recognizing who Jeremiah the prophet is, and even in his unsaved condition as a Gentile who recognized there is a God, but it is not his God, is saying, "God is going to whack this place." So when we see these two examples here, and we see Romans 2:12, where it says, "as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law," he is talking about Jews or Gentiles. God will deal with a Gentile by the tables of his heart, where the Word of God is written, like Abimelech and his captain of the guard. He will deal with a Jew in the nation of Israel by the Word of God that is written in stone. One of them has the tables of their heart; the other one has the tables of stone. So when you

begin to look at Romans 2:11 and 12 in that sense, it begins to make more sense. Doers of the Law vs. Hearers Only Then we move into Romans 2:13. With this verse, here is a great principle. This is something that really hits home in my life, and I am sure in yours. Here is what he says in Romans 2:13:

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. He is getting ready to make a classic statement about what he just said in Romans 2:11 and 12, and we will see that here in a moment. But here is one of those verses that you can just lift out and put right into your life and my life. I have found over the years that there are three types of Christians that you have to work with. This church is no different than any other church. Though I think this church, we have an extra portion of people who really love God and the Word of God. But every church is a kennel, and in kennels, you get all kinds of dogs. It is just that simple. Over the years in ministry and dealing with people, I have found that Christian people basically fall into three categories. The first category is people that come to church all the time, but they could care less about the Bible. Sometimes I look at them and wonder to myself, "Why do you even come?" The second group is people who really get into the Bible. They study the Bible and they know the Bible, but the downside of it is that they have no application of the Bible. Do not ever think for a second, do not even let a heartbeat go by in your mind, that you do not think you can learn the Bible without it changing your life. You can. I am telling you right now, there are a lot of people in churches who know the Bible. The problem is they do not know the Author of the Bible. That is the problem. That is the tragedy. They can spit out all kinds of facts and figures about whatever, and they can sit down and give you a running commentary on the Bible from one end to the other. They can probably answer your questions about the Bible. The problem is in their own personal life, there is no personal application that changes their life. This is where he is going with this verse. He says it is not just the hearers of the law that are justified, but it is the ones that hear the law and then do something with it. Let the Word of God have the effect that it is supposed to have. Then you have the third type of people that I call them my "love it and live it" crowd. They love the Bible and what it says, and they love to let the Bible change their life. I have to tell you that our church has a disproportionate amount of people like that, and I praise God for it every day. But they are very few. They are very hard to find. That kind of Christian in the day and age that we live in is not an easy thing to find. Most of God's people, they have a head knowledge, but they do not have a heart knowledge of the Word of God. They know the book, but like I said, they do not know the Author. God's Will vs. God's Plan In our discipleship lessons, we have a number of lessons that we will bring new Christians through. One-on-one, somebody will work with you and begin to lay establishment of a foundation in your mind and your heart about what the Bible will do for you. I think it is lesson six in there that deals with one of the great lessons that I think that most Christians are very short on. It is the aspect of God's will for your life versus God's plan for your life. In most churches and in most Christians' minds, and I have heard this even with preachers and missionaries and men that basically should have known better, I heard somebody get up and give a testimony and say, "Well, I know it was God's will for my life to be a missionary." Somebody else would get up and say, "Well, God's will for my life was to be an evangelist or to be a pastor." Or somebody will say, "Well, God's will for my life was to do this, or to do that." The problem with that is that is not the biblical definition of God's will. Now God has a will for your life; there is no question about that. But God also has a

plan for your life. Here is the problem we get into: God's will for your life is not something that you do. God's will for your life is something that you are every day in your life. God's will for your life and God's will for my life are one and the same. God's plan for you and God's plan for me may be totally different. God's plan for me is to pastor a church. God's plan for you may not ever be to pastor a church. God may leave you where you are at and doing what you are doing in your life right now for the rest of your life. That is God's plan for your life. But God's will for your life and God's will for my life is one and the same. God's will for your life and my life is simply this: you and I need to be more like Jesus Christ today than we were yesterday. You need to be more like Christ tomorrow than you were today. God's will for your life and my life is one and the same. We are on a daily path of life that every day we get a little closer to the Lord. You realize how that thing works. We talk about wrath against the day of wrath. Well, it works the same way for a Christian who loves God. It just does not call the same. It would be glory against the day of glory, I guess. Every day of your life you get one day closer to meeting Him face to face. That is going to be a glorious day. I do not want it to be a bad day for me. Maybe it will be; I hope not. But I do not want it to be. I do not intentionally get up in the morning and say, "Let us see how I can screw my day up." I do not have to do that; I just do it pretty well on my own sometimes. But my purpose in life, as best as I can try, is every day to love Him more than I did the day before. I am not saying I always do, but that is my goal because I know I am coming up against a day where I am going to face Him face to face and see Him. I do not want to meet a stranger. I do not want to have to say when the Rapture comes and I meet the Lord, "Now, who are You?" I do not want to get in the Rapture when we all get up there to Heaven and I know all of you, and then I see this man walk in and I say, "Now, who is that?" I want to know the Lord so intimately that when I get there, I know everything there is to know about Him. That is the way that should be the goal of your life. If you are a Christian, you do not want any surprises. I already know as I stand here today, I am going to have to face the Judgment Seat of Christ. I was never good in public school, but I always found a way to pass. I am not going to come out and say I cheated, but I found a way to cheat the right way and make it work. Some people would be ashamed of what I am about to tell you; I am rather proud of it. When I was in high school, I was all ready to pass and get graduated, except for in one class. That class was government, and I was flunking government. If I flunked government, that was a required class. Government was holding me back. I wanted to go in the army; I was going to make a career out of it at that point in my life, and I wanted to go into the military, and I had to graduate. So I just made a deal with the economics teacher. I went in, I sat down with him, and I said, "Look, I do not get economics. It is not because I cannot; I just do not want to. I just cannot." I said, "Look, I have not caused you any problems all year. I have tried hard. I have never been a smart aleck. I have never given you problems. I have always been attentive to what you say." He said, "Yes, you are a very good student." I said, "Well, here is the deal. I want to go in the military, and if I do not pass economics, I am not going to be able to do that. I do not want time to go to summer school because I will not pass it there either. Let us just cut to the chase. What can I do for you that will get me a passing grade?" He thought for a moment and he said, "I have been trying to get my hands on a copy of a model state constitution." He says, "I have been trying everywhere." I did not even know what that was. He said, "I need that. If you can get me a model of the model state constitution, I will take that as extra credit and you will pass the course." Here is a man who

cannot pass government. Now I have the task of finding a model state constitution. I do not know what that is, but I will get there sooner or later. So I start calling up my Congress representatives and I start saying, "Look, here is the deal. I am a young man." You have to talk the talk. "I am a young man that has proposed to go into the military and defend our country. I am somebody that I am fully committed, and I just want you to know that there is only one thing hanging me up. I need a copy, and I cannot get one unless I get one through you guys. I need a copy of..." I did not tell him what the deal was. You have to know how to fold them. I said, "This is what I need." Here is a young man that was going to go in and serve his country, which I did. Here is a young man that was willing to... Are you going to put it on? He says to me, "You know what? I would be glad to get you that copy." I got that copy, came back, gave it to my economics teacher and my government teacher. He looked at that thing and he says, "You do not even have to show up for the final exam." I said, "Thank you, sir. I appreciate that." I always can find a way. I am a survivor. That is all there is to it. That is just what you have to be. I say all that because, when it comes to Christianity, that is the way you have to be when it comes to that Bible. You have to have the tenacity of a bulldog. You have to realize that the Bible is a book that will change your life. When you see what you have to do for God, I thought to myself many, many years ago, after I got right with God, I thought to myself, "If I was willing to do that to accomplish my goals of what I wanted to do," which I am not saying was anything wrong with it. My motives were honorable. I wanted to serve my country in a time of war when nobody else wanted to go. I had that mindset. But I thought to myself many years later, "If I was willing to do that for myself, I am going to apply that same tenacity in doing what I have to do for God." Because that is what we have to come to the point in our lives where we realize that it is not about what you and I do for God. It is about what we are for God. God's will for your life and will for my life is the same: to be more like Christ every day of your life. That is why when you get into ministry with me and you want to take a part of my ministry, I take that very, very seriously. I look at you as an extension of myself. I have a set of standards I hold myself to. I will not cut you any slack on the standard that you have to hold yourself to. It is just that simple. That is why I warn people all the time, "You want to be part of my ministry, there is more that comes with that than a piece of paper that says I am a deacon or this or that. There is more to it than a piece of paper." I am not going to tell you what the responsibility of that is. God's plan for your life is whatever God wants you to do. You will only fulfill what God wants you to do with your life once you fulfill what God wants you to be in your life. In other words, you cannot do something for God until you first become something with God. This is what he is saying here. It is not just the hearers of the Word that are justified. All my life, all the time, people say one thing, but they live something else. You find that you have to, like I said, you have to be something for God before you can do something for God. I think the concept of 1 Samuel 15:22 is the first example to come to my mind about Saul. I meet a lot of Sauls in Christianity. I meet a lot of men and a lot of women in Christianity just like Saul. Saul comes to the place where he never wanted to build any real relationship with God, but he wanted the notoriety of being the king of Israel. In every aspect of his life, he never worried about what the Word of God said. He always found a way around it to do what he wanted to do. Here we come at the end of his time when the sacrifice was to be made. Saul was waiting for Samuel, who was the only legitimate one who could make that sacrifice because he had to be a priest, and Saul was not a priest. So he gets down to about 15 minutes or so before it

has to be made. Saul goes ahead and makes the sacrifice himself. Lo and behold, the moment he gets done with it, look who comes around the corner: it is Samuel. When they have the conversation, Samuel says, "Why did you do that?" Saul offers up the flimsy excuse that so many of us give to God or even give to me. He says, "Well, the circumstances dictated that I do that. You were not here, and the time was running out, and I just stepped in and took charge and did what I needed to do." Samuel said, "The time that I got here was in God's hand, and I still got here in time to do the sacrifice. Let me teach you a great lesson, Saul." 1 Samuel 15:22

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. The point is, what good are the sacrifices that we all make for God, or we say we do, or we think we do, when we do not obey what the Word of God says? It is not the hearing of the Word; it is the doing of the Word, he says. I find Christians that read the Bible, they know the Bible, but there is no practical application to their life. They read the Bible, but they do not live it. In time, it destroys your life, it destroys your marriage, it destroys your family, it destroys everything, and in a church, in time, it will destroy the church. I told you in Joshua chapter 1 many, many times, we taught it when we came through Joshua, I think I even preached it to you, that in Joshua chapter 1, he talks about the greatest commodity that you have as a Christian. It is the commodity that I look for in young men and young ladies, and it is the commodity of courage. I cannot stand people who do not want to be courageous for God. I am not the kind of man that attracts people that way. When I attract men in my ministry and my life, it is usually men who have the courage that want to do something for God, and women that want to. I have some courageous men and women in this church, and that is the way it is supposed to be. But courage in Joshua chapter 1 by itself is just not enough. In Joshua chapter 1, we find, fitting right into what it says here, he talks about that you and I as a believer have to have courage to simply believe what God says, especially in the day and age that we live in. In the day and age that we live in, we are criticized if we believe that this old black-back 66 is still the Word of God. I do not really care what you think, never have. I believe that this Bible is the absolute infallible Word of God, and if the whole world goes the other way, I will still stick with this. I have courage to believe it. Then in there, the Bible says that in the life that you and I have to live, we have some ups and downs. I tell you all the time, many things that happen in your life, many things that you have to go through and I have to go through, you are not the author of some of it. You are some of it. You are, but many times there will be circumstances that will come into your life that you will have to deal with that you had no part of it. It just landed in your lap, your front yard, your backyard, or came through your roof and landed in your bed. Now you are not responsible for the fact that it happened, but you are responsible for how you deal with it and how you respond to it. This comes up to the second thing that it takes courage in Joshua chapter 1, and that is courage to be able to rest in what the Word of God says. There are some troubling times out there this morning. If you missed the six o'clock news this morning, there are some real troubling times in this world. There are some real things on the horizon that do not look good. Gas is almost four dollars a gallon. It is going to get a lot worse before it gets better. Those kinds of things have a tendency. The last time you went to the grocery store, I am sure you saw that groceries cost a lot more than they did even a couple of months ago. Everything is. There is a tendency to put panic into Christianity. Of course, once panic hits an army, the army is finished.

The thing that holds an army together is the cohesiveness of the men and the courage that they have to hold that line and be what God wants them to be. It takes courage, my friend, to rest in this book in the times of troubled times. When you have to be faced with some issues that are physical issues, it is just kind of silly today to open up a book and just claim a promise and then say for that promise, it is going to be okay. I guarantee you, you can take this to the bank probably more than you can take your paycheck to the bank, because God's Word is eternal. Yes, it will get you through, but you have to learn to rest in it. You have to learn to believe it. But then the biggest one is the third one. Not only do you have to exercise courage to believe it, not only do you have to exercise courage to rest in it, but you have to exercise courage to obey it. That is the tough one. That is what is hard. The main point of all this is clear by now, I am sure. Having it in your heart or having it in stone, or if I might just add another application, having it in your hand this morning, does not change anything about you. No more than it changed about the Jew or it changed about the Gentile. The fact that one had it in the stony part of their heart and the other one had it in stone, and you and I have it in our hand, makes no difference if you just hear it, but you do not apply it. I could preach on this all day. James 1:22

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. We have God's people today who are saved and on their way to Heaven, who have deceived themselves into thinking they have a relationship with God when they do not. They know things that they think that knowing the Bible is proof of your relationship with God. They think that if you have the academics down and you know Daniel 2 and you know the Bible, how it goes apart, that that is some kind of badge or neon sign that says, "I really have a close relationship with God." Remember what I said, you can learn the Bible and know the Bible without it affecting and changing your life. If your life is not different today than it was five years ago, you have some problems in your life. It does not say you cannot fix it. The question is, are you honest enough? The real value of a child of God, his net worth, as far as I am concerned in ministry and in your own personal relationship with God, the real value of a child of God, his net worth or her net worth, is not what you say, but rather what you do with the principles in the Word of God, plain and simple. Does the Word of God change your life on a daily basis, or do you deceive yourself, that old legend in your own mind? A couple of weeks ago, I think it was the week before last, I loved it. I made the statement and I said, "How many of you love God more now than you did five years ago?" You should have seen your faces. I mean, it was not just... I know it is turkey season and the fall spring, and it is mating season, and you see them along the road where they will pop out their feathers and they walk around like this and drag that big old red bill down there and they flutter, they cut their wings down like that, walk around. It is mating time. They want to impress the hen. Most of us do that on Saturday night anyway, when we go out. We just put our different set of wings on. They are walking around down there and they are trying to impress them. I thought to myself, that is what so many of God's people do. They dress it all up on the outside and they want to give an impression. I remember I asked that question, "Do you love God more now than you did five years ago?" You should have seen it. The faces were priceless. It was... I heard even some amens, and everybody's head shook, and everybody smiled. If this room was dark when I asked that question, the lights in your faces would have lit this room until I asked a set of questions that brought you back down to earth. I told my wife, I looked over to her and I said, "Honey, just enjoy the silence. This is what a turkey farm sounds

like the day after Thanksgiving." No more amens, no more smiles. The lights went out because reality had set in. We always like to pretend that we are closer to God than we probably really are. Yet within that, you find some men and women who I really believe have the relationship with God that they really do. But I have learned a long time ago, I am never impressed by what somebody says. I am never impressed. To me, the value is not what you know about the Bible. The value to me is looking at your own personal life and seeing how you do the principles. The next thing I look at is your wife, and the next thing I look at is your family, because there is the true test. It does not mean nothing else means anything because we get the idea that it is just... We try to deceive ourselves into thinking, and many other times we do. I know it is true in winning people to Christ. We have had a lot of people saved in our church. The last person I personally won to the Lord was Clayton right here. We talked about that that morning. There is hardly a week that does not go by that somebody does not call me and say, "Someone got saved," or, "A friend of mine got saved." I am always happy about that. But I also know the reality of that. I never throw cold water on anything because I know people learn in time, and it goes on from there. You realize that based on what we are talking about today, how people deceive themselves. Let me tell you something. If God's people, you and me now, who have the Holy Spirit of God living inside us, who have the living Word of God and have a church like this, if you can sit here this morning and pretend to be one thing when you are really something else inside and not get honest with yourself, what do you think an unsaved person can do? I am very careful of how I win a person to Christ. There was a day, in fact, I teach... it is going to sound terrible, but you have to understand where I am coming from. I do not go out and just look for people. I know men that all they do is walk and witness to people on the street corner, or everybody they meet. I had a man tell me one time, he says, "If you do not win three out of the next five people you meet to Christ, there is something wrong with your spiritual walk with God." I just dismiss that stuff because I know how people like to manipulate with that. I do not want to win anybody to Christ that God's Spirit does not drop me in. Did you ever read the greatest example of soul winning in the Bible? It is in Acts chapter 8, where Philip did not do anything; God picked him up and put him in the position. That is the way I am. Maybe there was a day when you could go out and look for people to get saved. That day is gone. Noah preached for 120 years and nobody got saved. The Bible says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man." We are living in days where you have to be careful when people get saved. I am telling you, it is a situation where people have deceived themselves so much that I believe, personally—I just have to say this, personally, based on my observation, and I know who am I, big deal—my own personal observation of 30-something years in the ministry, based on where I am at today and what is going on, I believe that probably 95% of the people that make a profession of faith today never get saved. Never get saved. Do you know why? Because we made it too easy to get saved. We do not ask the right questions when somebody gets saved. Do you know what the problem is? We want people to get saved so desperately, we violate our own rule. You want it more than they do. When I win somebody to Christ, that person never dictates to me what they are going to do. Never. When I start to sit down with somebody who wants to get saved, and I start to say that, I deal with winning people to Christ like I deal with demon possession. Now that sounds weird. How can the two be together? Let me show you how they can be together. I have only had... you find some men who like to boast about all the

demons they have dealt with in all their lives. I have only had two experiences with demon possession, not myself. I have only had two cases of demon possession that I had to deal with. I am not one of these men that walk around and look at it. One time was at a church camp years ago, and a little kid who was demon possessed picked me up and threw me out the door and then talked to me in an ungodly voice that I would not even want to talk about this morning. I was forced in that situation because it was my camp, and I was there alone, and I had to deal with it. Did I want to? Absolutely not. I would have rather been in Atlantic City gambling. I wanted nothing to do with it, but I was forced into a scenario where I had to step up to the plate. Once I did that and got the thing taken care of, did I put a sign on the back of my car, "Half-Exorcist, Will Travel"? Did I open up a business, "Dealing with Demon Possession, Call Me"? It is like the man one time, he did not pay his exorcist bill when he got repossessed. Or the story about the demon-possessed chicken that laid deviled eggs. Did I go into that? No. I wanted to be farther away from it than I ever was in my life. The second time I had to deal with it, I did not want to go into it. But if you ever had a demon speak to you out of a hot water heater, it is time to go home, pack it up, and get some drinks. I will tell you what, that one, I was ready to tie one on. I did not, but I sure thought about it a lot. Once I went through that, I realized that I was in a situation that was absolutely crucial. If I did not do the right thing at the right time in the right way, that this whole thing was going to go south real quick. When I look at dealing with somebody to Christ, here is what I say to God: "God, it is not that I am not willing to deal with that scenario. It is the fact that I do not want to. I am not going to go around looking for it. I am not going to walk around saying, 'You look demon possessed. May I help you?' I am not looking for it. I am going to stay as far away from it as I can. That way, when God drops me in the middle, I know I have no other recourse but to do what God wants me to do. I know now it is not something I did not orchestrate." I am the same way about winning people to Christ. I want everybody to be saved, but I know the times that we live in. I know that men and women today are very, very confused. Many, many times they come to God, and we talk one language, and they are hearing another language. I know the sinners, the men you deal with, the women you deal with, the unsaved people themselves. How many times I have seen a person claim to get saved, but no change takes place in their life. Let me tell you something. If you legitimately got saved and there is no effect of change in your life, you better check something out. I think you better pull your dipstick and see if there is oil in there. Something is wrong. I have sat down with people when I started to show them about being saved, and they would stop me and say, "Well, I am going to tell you right now, I am not going to do this, this, this, this, and this." What do you have to work with? You are going to dictate to me about salvation because you are going to be on your... Never win somebody to Christ when it is on their terms. Never. You are wasting your time. I never do that. I will always let it be. You find the one person that when you tell them and they just want to know, and they look at you and they will just say, "Well, I will do whatever I have to do. You have to be baptized tomorrow? You have to do that? I will do it. Whatever I have to do. I just want to be saved. I am tired of this life. I want to be that. Whatever I have to do." When you get them that way, you know you are in the right spot. When you get them saying, "Well, do I have to come to church now? Do I have to get baptized? Do I have to do this?" When somebody starts, before they are ever saved, dictating to you what they like and what they do not like, you are in trouble. I never allow myself to get into those situations because it is more than

just hearing what it says. I tell them, "When you get saved, God expects something from you. He has something He wants you to do. He is not saving you because He is in the savings business. He is saving you to do something. He expects something for you to change in your life to fulfill." Somebody says, "Well, I am not ready to do that." Then you are not ready to be saved. Going on with it and giving them a false sense of salvation and giving you another star in your forehead is ridiculous. I talked to him, when you got saved, I did not make it easy on you. We went through the thing how many times? Dealing with every issue, back and forth. I wanted to make sure. Yet he was a piece of cake because he wanted to be saved. He did not say to me, "Well, I do not know, Bob, I do not know if I want to do this." It was not. It was, "Whatever I have to do. I am tired of the way it is. I saw somebody else's life. That is what I want." No argument. No going back and forth. No me talking him into this. Our problem is, we are afraid they will not get saved if we lay on them all the responsibility that has to change in their life. We are afraid that they will not get saved. They did not get saved anyhow. You cannot come to God to get saved and forget to talk about repentance, turning from where you are at. We have lots of people that are willing to be saved. We just do not have people who want to repent and turn from what they are doing. So our responsibility is to explain to them God does not need any more just hearers of the Word. He needs people who are doers of the Word. There is our problem. Look at Romans 2:14:

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Let us see what this breaks down to be. If all we see now that we are not to be just hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word, all this goes together. Romans 2:14 says that we as Gentiles, when we do not follow the law written in our hearts, here is what we do: we make up our own laws. That is what we do. We all do that. We all make up our own laws. That is what Gentiles do. They do this to sear their conscience and to justify what they want to do in spite of what the Bible says. Let me tell you something. I know me well enough to know this: I can talk myself into doing anything and justify it if I allow myself to do it. I am telling you right now. If you do not know you are in that same boat, you are either a dumb, stupid fence post, or you are lying. We can talk ourselves into anything we want to do and bring God into it and justify it and get away with it in our own minds, our own hearts, because that is what we want to do. It is the principles of the Word of God that keep you from going there. That is why I harp on it day and night every time I am with you, every time I see you, that the thing that makes the difference in your life is not just being a hearer of the Word, but a doer, living your life by the principle. But you have to learn the principles first to apply them to your life. They do it to sear their conscience, justify what we want to do, in spite of everything the Bible says. It is like we are oblivious to the principles because it is what I want to do. It benefits me. I have got myself firmly convinced that this is what I need to do. Do not confuse it with a lot of facts and biblical principles that tell me that what I am about to do is a disaster. Look at Romans 2:15:

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) There it is. When Romans 2:14 takes place and you reject the law of God that God has given you in your heart and you make up your own law to do what you want to do, then Romans 2:15 is the automatic thing in your life. What you start doing is you start excusing yourself while you accuse others. That is us. Seven Alibis for Sin Over the years in my counseling format, I have kept a record of things

that I have noticed and seen that I use them to form personality profiles when I am dealing with people. I have found over the years seven things, seven alibis the devil gives a man, a Christian man or an unsaved man, and certainly to Israel, seven things the devil gives a man to help him alibi his sin. Because we all have not only the problem of an old sin nature, we all do not like accountability or responsibility. We just do not. I have found about Christians: I can have a great relationship with most of you, if not all of you. I can have a great relationship with all of you until I have to deal with you on an issue. That is the way it works. I found out over the years we can get along just fine until there is a problem that I have to deal with, and then I am the bad guy. That is the way it works. Parents, do you not see your kids the same way? Some of your kids down there in the elementary, I guarantee you. Right now you have some real issues down there that you are maybe not paying attention to. Your kids are just fine as long as you do not... Somebody says, "Well, he is really a good boy. She is really a good girl." Yes, right up to the point that they do something wrong and you have to deal with them. Then the fangs come out. You see that thing is going to transpose itself right down when they are 20, 21, 22, 23, and an issue comes up in their life, and you try to exercise your parenting wisdom or give them this and give them that, you are going to see the same kind of attitude. They do not want to hear it. They will be a great child. They will get along fine until there is an issue that you have to confront with them, and then suddenly they are your enemy, or you are their enemy. Seven things the devil gives a man to alibi his sin: I hear this all my life: "We have just always done it this way, Bob." "This is the way I was raised. This is the way we have always done it." "Everybody else does it." "Everybody else is out there doing this. I just think you are too narrow-minded here. Everybody else is out there doing it." "Now you are going to get upset with me and call me to account. Look at her and him out there. Look at so-and-so." I used to pull it out when I was in junior high. By the way, it did not work with my mother anymore, and it works with me. Trying to get the attention off what you did and put the blame on somebody else. "Well, brother, the Lord just led me." I love that one. "God just... God told me." Do not ever pull that one on me. I should not even tell you that now; I just blew it. The first thing you are going to get is my Bible. You are going to say, "God never has a plan without a principle." Never does. Show me, based on where you are at, what the principle is. Then we will find out if God told you or God led you, or you are just doing it because you want to do and bringing God into it. That is how it works. He says, "Do not be just hearers of the Word, but be doers of the Word, not deceiving your own selves." That is what we do. Judging Ourselves and Jacob's Story Look at Romans 2:16:

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. You and I better learn to judge ourselves so God will not have to come down and judge us by Him. If Israel would learn that lesson, they would never have to go through the Tribulation period. If an unsaved man would learn that lesson, he would be saved and never wind up with the Great White Throne Judgment. If a child of God would learn that lesson, they would not have the heartache they have in their life, the problems in their families, and would not wind up with the Judgment Seat of Christ losing everything they have got. One of my favorite stories in the Bible is Genesis chapter 32. It is a favorite story in the Bible because it is so me. I would like to tell you that this is a story of Solomon and his wisdom and tell you how wise I am, but that would not be the truth. I wish this would be the story of David where God says that he was a king after a man at my own heart, but that would not be the truth either. No, when I want to find a story that

is really personal to me, I wish it would be Abraham being the friend of God. I wish it would be Noah. I wish it would be all those stories, but if I have to find the one that really fits into me, it is probably good. If I have to find the one, it is a story in Genesis chapter 32, and it is a story of Jacob. I think if you would be honest this morning, this is one of your favorite stories. In this chapter, you have Jacob. The name Jacob, by the way, means "schemer," "supplanter." All of Jacob's life up to this point has been one where he has manipulated the circumstances, giving God the credit for it, bringing God's name in it when God has not been a hundred miles around it. He schemed to get his wife from Laban. He schemed to get the cattle. He schemed to get the birthright. He schemed to get the blessing. He has schemed his life all the way down the road. The good thing is this: God loved Jacob. God had a plan for Jacob, but God, up to this point, Jacob is just a hearer of the Word. He is not a doer of the Word. So we have in Genesis chapter 32 where I can go back to the time of my life, many, many, many years ago. I am sure if you thought about it long enough, you probably go back in your life, and maybe you are coming to that point in your life, maybe you are in it now. I do not know. I call, and if you ever look at my Bible across that chapter 32, it will be in big letters, "The Day God Gets You Alone." Because that is what He did with Jacob. In this chapter, He wants to change Jacob's name. The changing of names in the Bible is very significant. It shows that God now has done with a man what He has done here, and He is ready to move on to the next level and accomplish what God wants you to accomplish. Jacob represents his name. Jacob represents your flesh and your old nature and my old nature. Israel represents the new nature that we have once we get saved. God could not take Jacob any farther going on the old nature. He could not. God has a plan for Jacob. God had a plan for me. God has a plan for you. But there comes a point where God is not going to take you any farther or do anything more with you until you deal with where you are at. If you ever look at that story, and you need to, do not turn to it now. I do not want to break loose your train of thought, but go home this afternoon and read this story. It is an incredible story. He has a wrestling match going on with God. It is like big-time wrestling. He and God are wrestling, and yet it is not wrestling in the sense that me and Paul get down on the floor and put a double hammerlock on each other. Hosea talks about the fact that this wrestling match going on is about the will that Jacob wants to stay who he is, and God wants to take him to the next level. God prevails. But how did He prevail? He had to reach down and touch his thigh and bring it out of joint. For Jacob finally did what God wanted him to do, but he limped the rest of his life. Every morning I look into the mirror and comb my hair. I have a scar that crowns my forehead. That was my day alone with God because God wanted me to do some things in my life, and I was not willing to do it. God had to run me in the middle of the night one time in the back of a tractor-trailer truck loaded with steel and almost came that close to taking my head off. Cut me from six ways to Sunday across my head. That is when God had to get me alone for me to settle what I had to settle to do what God wanted me to do. God wanted to change me to do something else, and I was satisfied where I was. Your day will come. When he starts wrestling down there, God looks at him, and Jacob is out of breath, and he says, "Two out of three matches?" God says, he finally said, "I will do what You want to do, God." Jacob says, "Okay, I am Yours." Do you know the first question God asked him? God did not ask him, "Okay, here is what we are going to do," or "What are your abilities?" or "What are your talents?" or "How much do you know about the Bible?" Do you know the first question God asked him? He said, "Okay, Jacob, do you really

want to serve Me? Yes, I do. Okay. What is your name?"Did you ever notice that is the same thing his daddy asked him when he was in the middle of deceiving him back there in Genesis? Do you know why God asked him his name? Because He wanted to hear him say it. "What is my name? My name is schemer. My name is supplanter. My name is Jacob." The day God gets you alone. The day God gets you alone. Let me ask you a question. Who are you really today? Will the real you and me please stand up today? Who are you today? I am not talking about who you pretend to be here. I am talking about hearers of the Word versus doers of the Word. God has something He wants to do in your life. It ought to be the most important thing in your world today. It ought to take precedence over everything and plan you have got. Everything you do and attempt to do the rest of your life should be run through that plan so that you do not screw it up. But you know what it takes? It takes you and me getting honest with ourselves first. It takes you and me realizing who we are, honestly with God about who you are. I gave you some things that the devil, seven alibis the devil gives you. Seven Questions for Honest Self-Assessment Now let me give you seven things, and I have this in my heart, in my mind, and in my Bible, and everywhere I go. The seven things you ought to go through in your life before you get involved in anything. Do not do this, and you run the risk of ruining your life. You certainly will stay where you are at, and you will have your own day with God. These things help you deal honestly with God about who you are today. That is the question. When you leave here in a few minutes from now, you have one thing you have to deal with, and I guarantee you. Who are you? The Holy Spirit of God is going to haunt you the rest of the day. You may sit there and say, "Oh, not me." That is because you seared your conscience. You may say, "Ah, that is because you deceived yourself." If you are honest today and you really want a relationship with God, and you may be hitting on all these cylinders and be the best person that you can be right now in your life, that question is going to still focus inside you because that is really the issue. It does not matter that you hear me every Sunday. It does not matter that you hear what is being said. It only matters in how does it change you in your relationships. How does it affect you and your attitude toward people? How does it affect you in your relationship? How does it deal with your situation in life? How does it deal with you and your relationship with your family and your children? You need to teach your children these seven things. I guarantee you. You have them young right now. You ingrain these seven things into them. They will not be making some of the big, dumb mistakes they are going to make in life. The first one is simply this: I ask myself about everything I do. I ask myself, "Is what I am about to do right before Almighty God?" That will kill it right there. You say, "Well, Bob, I do not always know." Then let me give you a little addendum to this: If in doubt, find out. If I am on ice skates and I come into the lake and I said, "Well, the ice looks pretty thin, and that lake is deep. I wonder if that ice is enough to hold me." What fool would ice skate on it when you see spots of water and somebody's little cap where they went in? The second thing: "What I am about to do and what am I going to get into? Will it edify me or somebody else?" That is the bottom line of your life and my life. My life is not to hurt you. Now, I have to say some tough things to you sometimes, and I have to deal with tough things. But no matter what we go through and whatever I have to deal with you on, whatever the case may be, I guarantee you my bottom line motive will always be to edify you and to help you. I have no personal agendas against anybody other than personally you become everything God wants you to be. That is all I care about. You have to look at what you are in and what you are doing and

ask yourself the question, "Will it edify me or is it going to edify somebody else?" The third one: "Can I honestly ask God to bless this?" These things will work if you apply them. They will work. You are getting yourself into a situation that you are not sure of, and just ask the other party, "Can we have a word of prayer before we see what happens?" The fourth thing is, "What is the biblical principle concerning what I am about to do?" God always has a plan. God always has a principle. You will never find God having a plan for anything you are to do that there is not a principle that goes along with it. It is just that simple. When we move in it, we deceive ourselves without that principle. The fifth one, this is the killer for me. This is probably the killer for all of us: "Is God really in this, or is this me manipulating the circumstances to get what I want?" That will kill you. These things make you honest before God. They check your motive for what you do. The next thing, the sixth one is, "Will God get the honor and glory out of this?" Now here is the last one. This is a good one too: "Would the Lord be pleased if He came right now and found me doing what I am doing?" Those seven things will keep you honest before God. Those seven things will give you the ability to make sure you do not make up your own laws as you go along. Those things will make sure that you are looking at you and you are always who you say you are. That you are always looking, and God is always asking you the question, "What is your name?" That old thing with Jacob is an incredible thing. The Mirror of God's Word In Romans chapter 2, God is showing us that the Jews and the Gentiles will be judged the same way. We saw that when we started. One will be judged in their unrighteousness without the law; that will be the Gentiles. The other will be judged in their self-righteousness by the law; that will be the Jews. We saw now that the real issue is not whether the Jews are better than the Gentiles because they were given the written oracles of God, one on tables of stone and one on the tables of the heart, but rather the real issue for you and me today and for them is, "Are you doing and obeying what the book says?" In both cases, the Jews and the Gentiles were not doing that. It is not about what you say; it is about what you do. It is not being just a hearer of the Word, but a doer of the Word. There is a day coming when God shall judge the secrets of men, Jew and Gentile, by His Son Jesus Christ according to His Gospel. The Jew is going to be judged when he goes through the Tribulation period. That is historically. The unsaved Gentiles are going to be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment. That will be doctrinally. The child of God will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. That will be inspirationally. We are not to be just hearers of the Word, but be doers of the Word. I want to give you this, and we are done here now, but I just want to give you this. I want you to go home with this, and this will be a fitting end to ruining the rest of your day. But here is the real issue, and I want to leave you with this. James chapter 1, verses 23, 24, and 25. You can just listen to it. James 1:23-25

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Do you get all that in there? That is one incredible passage. It says first of all in James 1:22 again, we are not to be hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word. Then he says, "If any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man that beholdeth his natural face in a glass." Do you know

what that is a picture of? That is a picture of you and me getting up in the morning and looking at what we... Ladies, I am not arguing with this. All of you look very beautiful today. You really do. But you know you did not look that way when you got up this morning. If I would have come over to your house earlier this morning to pick something up, you would have had your husband come to the door because, as one lady said one time, "I cannot face Bob. I do not have my face on." I asked, "Well, was she in an accident that she lost her face?" She meant she was not made up. I like that word, "made up." We call it makeup. You make yourself up. Ladies, do not take this personal. I am like Bob Jones Sr.: "The barn door needs painting. You go ahead and paint it." Do not take any offense to that whatsoever. My point is this: you do not look today right now what you looked like in the morning. Nor do I. When you get up in the morning, you are looking at me the first time. It is "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" It is not you, sweetheart. You know that little story about "Mirror, mirror on the wall" in a little kid's story about Snow White. That is so true. Snow White, as most of the little fairy tales, are really biblical tales. Snow White, she got a poison fruit from a wicked witch, and she was dead. She was dead until one day her prince came and kissed her and brought her back to life. My great-great-great-great-great-granddaddy Adam was once Snow White, and the Bible says because sin passed upon Adam, it passed upon all men, and I died in trespasses and sin, and mankind was dead for a long time until our Prince came. The day you got saved, the Prince of Peace kissed your soul and brought you back to life. Who is the fairest of them all? Snow White was. Now you see, she looked in the mirror every day of her life, and she saw she was ugly, she was horrid, but she had deceived herself by what the mirror told her. That mirror lied to her. The mirror you hold in your hand, the Word of God, will never lie to you. But that is why we do not like to read it. That is why you do not like to look at it. That is why some of you do not like this message. You were trapped. Trapped. You could not leave because if you left, you know you would be too obvious, but you were trapped. You wanted to get out. Why? Because I was forcing you to look into a mirror that exposed who you really are today. Now you have got to deal with that. She thought she was the fairest. The truth of the matter is only Snow White was the fairest, and the only way you are to be the fairest is to become Snow White. Get your sins... That is what Jesus said: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Snow White. I am telling you, the Bible says that you behold your natural face in a glass. When you see in James 1:24, when you see who you really were, it says there, "For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way." He does not go God's way. He goes his way. He saw who he was. He chose a conscious choice to stay where he is and who he is, and then he goes his way. Then he adds to that the fact that he sears his conscience, and he forgets what manner of man he is. In other words, he deceives himself. Here it comes. James 1:25

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Do you see that thing? Doer of the Word translates into doer of the work. Do you see how he changed that thing? You do the Word, you will do the work. You hear the Word, you will never do the work. "This man shall be blessed in his deed." When I was a little kid, we were going on a vacation back to my aunts and uncles in Maryland. We stopped at a truck stop, and it was real early in the morning. A big old tractor-trailer was parked there, and I was just a little kid. I watched this truck driver get out, a big old burly man. He reaches up in his cab and he gets a big steel pipe, and he

walks around, and he is beating all the tires. Now for a little man, that did not make any sense to me. I walked up to him, and he was working his way around, and I walked up and I said, "Hi, mister, how are you?" He said, "Hi, little man, how are you?" I said, "I am fine." I said, "What? Something wrong with your truck?" He said, "No, why?" I said, "Well, you are beating the tires." He says, "Well, you have to do that sometimes, and you do it about every so many miles because if you keep beating the tires, if there is something wrong with the tires, or the tires are going to have a problem, or something is going to go on, if you beat the tires, you do not get the right sound when you beat them, and it is just you beat the tires so that you keep the thing from getting bad." I never forgot that. Do you know what I did today for you? I just beat the tires. I am not saying there is anything wrong with any of you. I think for the most part, you are the greatest people in all the world, and I will say all of you. I have no problem at all. But you do not want, just like that trucker had nothing wrong with his truck, but he needed to beat the tires to keep things from getting bad. Sometimes in churches, pastors need to beat the tires. We just need to put it out there and make you realize and get honest with all of ourselves who we really are. Do we really do what we do because we are a hearer of the Word or a doer of the Word? The bottom line is, at the end of the day, who are you? Who you really are and the things that you do, do you do it because of your own self, what you want to do, or are you actually applying the principles and doing what God wants you to do? That is the question. Romans is a great book. Romans is a book that forces me not only to look and see what God has done for me as the church, but it forces me to look inside myself because I want to tell you this: we all start out as Jacobs, every one of us. Even though you get saved, your old nature is still the nature that is predominant in you until you turn that around. That is why we disciple you. That is why I work with you. That is why I have people work with you. That is why we will put whatever in your life we have to put in there because we have to get you past the wrestling match and the struggling match so that you do not stay Jacobs. God wants to do something with every one of you. God has a plan for you if you are saved, and He wants to fulfill that plan, but it only starts with you and me getting honest with ourselves and saying to ourselves who we really are and ending that wrestling match with God so that you start doing what God wants you to do. Do not just be a hearer, but be a doer. Have a purpose behind why you are here on Sunday. Have a purpose behind why you are there on Thursday night. Have a purpose behind everything that you do that goes back to the Word of God so that you never find yourself in a situation that you do not exactly know where you are at in your relationship with God because when you get there, you will wind up deceiving yourself.