

# Romans 4

Sunday 7/20/2008

## SEC: The Doctrine of Imputed Righteousness

The book of Romans is built around two men, David and Abraham, found in Romans chapter 4. They represent the great concept of getting God's righteousness, which is what the book of Romans is all about. We are coming out of the Old Testament and now into the New Testament church. Where the Old Testament was set up on a work system, as far as keeping the law and the sacrifices, we have now entered into what we call the Church Age, where salvation has come through grace and faith, with nothing else involved.

The first great doctrine established in Romans is the doctrine of God's imputed righteousness, or the doctrine of God's justification of you and I. God imputed His righteousness to us. We talked last week about the word "imputed," how it means to put on our account. It means to put as Abraham, he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

The day you and I got saved, what God basically did is this: He took His righteousness and He gave it to us. Then He took our sin and He put it on His Son. That is why you and I have the ability, when we trust Christ as our own personal Savior, to be saved and then spend an eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ.

David and Abraham represent those two great principles. It was Abraham, if you remember, that got God's righteousness simply by faith without anything. In Genesis 15, God takes Abraham out on a starry night and shows him the stars. The Bible says that He tells Abraham, "Someday your seed is going to be like the stars of heaven." The Bible says that Abraham believed God, and at that point, God counted it to Abraham for righteousness.

Then David, and that is who we are looking at today, started last week. Last week, we put the end in front of the beginning and I showed you how David got messed up. It is very instructional for you to understand these principles as we come through and look at David's life. David is the other example. Where Abraham got God's righteousness by faith plus nothing, David represents the aspect of you and I getting God's righteousness when we did not deserve it.

David commits two sins that in the Old Testament, or under the Old Testament law, there is no sacrifice for. The only payment can be death, and that is murder and adultery. Yet the Bible says that God gave David the sure mercies of David and did not kill him. There is an example of what you and I got. Abraham represents how I got it by faith plus nothing. David represents the fact that when I got it, I did not deserve it. You take those two men, and it is a great study to come through the Bible.

## SEC: David's Life: Shepherd, King, and Man of God

I told you last week, we are going to look at David through three aspects. When you study the life of David, then a little bit later on, we are going to come back and do Abraham. I want you to see both these guys. They are absolutely important to understand the book of Romans.

I told you that there are three aspects of David's life, or at least how we are going to study it:

1. We are going to look at David as a shepherd. We are going to look at that today.
2. Then we are going to look at David as king, the king of Israel.
3. And then we are going to look at David as the man of God.

I told you last week that there are three books in your Bible that really lay it out this way: First and Second Samuel deal with him as a shepherd and king, and the book of First Chronicles deals with him as God's man. Today, using that little model, I want to look at his life and study him as God's shepherd. I think that once you begin to see this, you will realize a great truth.

I tell you this all the time, but I want you to remember it: in the Old Testament, you have a lot of stories. Every book of the Bible in the Old Testament is basically a story about something. When you get into the New Testament, for the most part, past Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you will find there are not any stories told. You will find that it is principles about how to live your life and how to accomplish things in your life.

What you have to do with the Bible is realize that the stories in the Old Testament—the stories of men's lives, the situations they get into, the women in the Bible, the children in the Bible, all the great prophets of the Bible, the kings of the Bible—all of those men's lives and what they go through are handpicked by God and illustrate the New Testament principles.

When it comes to really knowing your Bible and understanding your Bible, you hear me use the term "a working knowledge of the Bible." A working knowledge of the Bible is a Bible that works for you. Not just something that is on your coffee table, not just something that you carry around, profess to believe but never read, but a working knowledge of the Bible is a Bible that works for you. In any given situation in life, in any trial and tribulation, anything you are up against in life, you can go to the Bible and see the principle illustrated by the story and then apply it to your own life. It is absolutely key, and I spend a lot of time talking about those aspects of the Word of God.

When it comes to David, and we begin to look at David as God's shepherd, there are some great parallels. David's early life as a young shepherd yields some of the greatest inspiration or material for our daily relationship with God. It is quite incredible. When you begin to study David's life from the aspect of him being a shepherd, God's shepherd, we begin to see the foundational years of his life. We begin to see how God began in that very early part of his life to manifest Himself and build into David the great principles that even though David went astray and David got into some problems, God got him back because of what God had invested in his heart.

#### SEC: The Crucial Nature of Foundational Years

I have made it my life to really study the Word of God. I do not claim to be a Bible scholar in any sense of the term, but I am a Bible student. I believe that the difference between a Bible scholar and a Bible student is simple: a Bible scholar thinks he has arrived and has nothing else to learn, and now he just wants to teach you. But a Bible student is someone who understands that you never learn the Bible completely, and life is a learning process even for the one myself

who teaches you. I do not stand up here as somebody who has arrived and understands everything about the Bible. I stand up here as someone that learns every day just like you do.

In fact, many times when you come over and we sit down together and go through the Bible, as many of you do, I learn as much from you as you probably do from me. So it is a two-way street. If I have learned anything in my life about looking at David's life from the aspect of him being a shepherd, and try to apply it in my own life to be a better pastor, I work at this all the time. There is never a day in my life that goes by that I do not ask myself in some way, "How can I be better? How can I do better for the church and the people that God has given to me? What can I do better this week than I did not do last week?" My life is one of constantly looking at it and trying to formulate a better way to help you get where God wants you to be.

I have come to the conclusion long before today, but studying David's life, which I took a study of his life many, many years ago, I realized one great truth about me as your pastor and you as a member of this church: I understand that the most important time in your life is those early years right when you first get saved, or maybe you are already saved, but you have been kind of circling the field for a lot of years and never really found a church to get into.

People come in two categories:

4. Some of them come in and they get saved, and we begin the process of teaching them the Bible.
5. Some people come in, they have been saved for a long time, but have just never really plugged in anywhere in the Bible or a church and never really got grounded. So we take those people and ground you.

Either way you come in, I have learned this from a study of David's life: the most important time of your life is these early years to lay the foundation in your life. It is a time when you have not learned, what I love about this church, the thing I love about this church, is that most of you have never learned to be Baptist. You have never learned how to play the political game. You have never learned how to manipulate things. You just come here for the most part, you love God, you love the Word of God, and you just want to learn what God has you to do. You want to raise your families as best you can. Many of you want to make your marriages better and you want to try to be and do and fulfill what God has for you to do.

There is not any politics in this church. This church is just based on the Bible. One of the things I try to do is I try to keep this church as close to a New Testament church as I can get it, living in the 21st century. Not always easy to do, but it ought to be the goal of every pastor: keep it as simple as possible and keep it as profitable as it can be for you. Make sure that every time I stand in this pulpit, I have something that challenges you or gives you what you need for what you are going through in your life.

I have learned this: your foundational years, your early years, are absolutely crucial. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and we had our softball devotion last night and David, his eyes are used as text. It is a great text. He is talked about in 1 Corinthians 3:11-16, where it talks about no other foundation can a man lay.

## 1 Corinthians 3:11

*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

The day you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life. That foundation is Jesus Christ. Then it goes on to say that you need to build three things on that foundation: gold, silver, and precious stones. We have talked about this before, and this is certainly not new to you, but it needs to be repeated over and over again so we all grasp it because, as we all know, the price of learning is repetition.

He says three things on that foundation: gold, silver, precious stones. I have told you many times that those three things represent the foundational years of your life. They are what I try to build into your life and give you what you need.

*> Gold represents the deity of Christ. In other words, getting to know who God is, getting to know about God, getting to understand the concept. You would be absolutely surprised that most of God's people who are saved and on their way to heaven really do not have a biblical concept of who God is. You have Christians out there today that are saved and go into heaven, and they are looking over their shoulder every five minutes because they have maybe not lived their life the way they think that God would have them to live it. So they are waiting for God to come down with a big old flash water and whack them. They are just living in constant fear. That is not the God of the Bible. God loves you if you are His child, and God wants the best for you. I am certainly not going to take away that sometimes God does not come down and takes us all to the woodshed, but you do not have to live your life in fear at the fact that God is some revengeful God who is just waiting to give you some incurable disease. That is not the God of the Bible. You need to learn about God.*

*> Silver in the Bible is redemption. Jesus Christ was sold for 30 pieces of silver. The silver on the foundation will represent you learning about what He did for you. It is a process, but it is a process that needs to be built in the formulation years of your life once you get saved or once you decide to become what God wants you to be. When you make that decision that you want to be serious with God, it is my job as a pastor to have you what you need to get that done in your life. Silver represents the redemption, understanding the price that God paid for your salvation and my salvation.*

*> The third one, of course, is precious stones. Precious stones in the Bible are likened to people. It shows us the process when you get to know God and you build your relationship with God in these foundational years. If I am doing my job right, you will not only learn about God, but you will also learn what God did for you. You cannot learn about God and then learn what God did for you without wanting to tell somebody else about it. That is the natural process. That is that foundational years in your life.*

SEC: The Shepherd's Heart: Diligence and Discipleship

Proverbs 27:23 ought to be the watch verse for every pastor who ever lived. It simply says this:

*Proverbs 27:23*

*Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds.*

That is a great verse for a pastor. It is a shepherd's verse. We are going to talk today about David being a shepherd. We are going to talk about how God wants you to be a shepherd. But there is a process and the incredible process that takes place or needs to take place in our early years.

I love that verse that says, "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks." Notice it did not say the number. It did not say the financial status. It simply said the state of thy flocks. In the Bible, one of the great doctrines is the doctrine of standing in state. We know that when you get saved, your standing in Christ Jesus is up in heaven. You are seated in heavenly places. But the state is what you and I live every day in our life. We struggle through. The state that you are in this morning is simply where you are at in your own personal relationship with God as you walk through this life. My job is to be diligent to look at the state of my flocks, where you are at spiritually, to help you get where God wants you to be.

My job, very basically, if you want to put it in a nutshell, is to give you the best shot as a child of God. My job is twofold:

6. If you are an unsaved man or an unsaved woman here this morning, I have one goal today. That goal is to give you the best shot of finding Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior as I can.
7. If you are a saved person here this morning, my job is in the second phase of it, is to give you the best shot of standing at the judgment seat of Christ, not being ashamed and having everything that God has for you.

That is what it takes for a pastor to look after the state of his flocks. Back in the 80s, I began to see how, and ask myself, "How can I better help my people?" My ministry was growing and I was beginning to see people get saved. I asked myself the question, "What can I do that will really help my people understand and grasp the fundamentals of the Bible?" I came up with the concept, certainly not unique to me, it is in the Bible, but I put it into a working form. I came up with the concept of discipleship.

Mike and I were talking this week, and you brought up the fact, it was back in the 80s. Down in my little office there, I had little groups of 10 people, and you were one of the first ones that came through those discipleship lessons. We still use those discipleship lessons today. When a person gets saved or a person wants to start to learn the Bible, that becomes the fundamental place that we start, giving you the basic fundamental concepts of how the Bible works for you and how you can use it in your own life. It is where it has to start.

The ministry, if you ever get into the ministry, and I know some of you will, some of you will pastor, but the ministry has been for me a learning process. Never as a pastor get to the place in your life where you think your people cannot teach you anything. That is a very dangerous place to be in. Never get so high up as being a pastor or a leader or whatever the case may be, where you think that you are above learning something from your people.

I want to tell you something, outside of the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God, the greatest teachers in my life have been you, the people that God has put in my life. Many of you have

taught me things that you do not even know. There are many things that I have watched you do that you did not even see me watch you do it, that ministered to me. You learn, the ministry is more than just getting up here and saying, "I am in charge and this is what you need to do." The ministry is a learning process for both of us.

I have learned that what I need to do in my life is exactly what you need to do. I am not any better than you. I may be the pastor of this church, but I am certainly not any better than you. I struggle with the same thing that you struggle with. I have to deal with the same issues in life that you do. Together, as we come through the Word of God, that is where we use the Bible to fix it.

I have learned that my life and your life should be in a constant state of redefining yourself. You never should be satisfied with where you are at. You always want to be looking. I know in my life, I always start looking at how I can be a better pastor, how I can be better in everything that I try to do when it comes to the ministry and in my own personal life too. My job is to help perfect you for the ministry as the book of Ephesians says.

I have learned over the years that the best way to do that, and probably the only real way to do that, and this is what I love about our church, is the one-on-one times that we have in the Word of God together. If I have learned anything over the years, I have learned that if you really want to build a relationship and work your way to ministry where you really become everything that God wants you to be in this church, it is going to require that you and I understand where each other is at. You have to learn my heart, I have to learn your heart.

When we spend time together in the Word of God, we accomplish a couple of things:

8. You get to see where my heart is at. If you are ever going to be part of this ministry, and I understand it is God's ministry, but for whatever reason, God chose me to head it up and lead it. So therefore, His ministry has become my ministry. If you are ever going to be fruitful and productive in this ministry, you are going to have to know where I am at. You are going to have to see who I really am. You are going to have to learn the things that I love. You are going to have to see the way that I am. You are not going to get that from Sunday morning or just coming on Thursday. No, you will get some of it. But if you really want to know who I am, you come over and spend time with me one-on-one.
9. I want you to do it so I can see your heart. The ministry is yoking up together. The ministry is two people becoming one mindset to accomplish the ministry. When you get a whole church of two or three hundred people doing that, then you have a ministry that is hitting on all eight cylinders.

At the same time, when we spend time together, we get to straighten out some things that maybe you are not sure of. Shore up some things in your life. I do know this, and most of you can attest to this. I say this because the foundational years of your life, once you either get saved or you decide you want to learn the Bible, are absolutely crucial in your life. I would say that first two or three years after that are absolutely essential for you to get foundationalized in your life where you can really begin to use the Bible and know how the Bible works for you.

I know this, I watch some of you come over and you will have your little notebooks of questions, and we do it various different ways. For you visitors here, who do not know what I am talking about, I have a standard policy that I will spend an hour a week. It is about an hour every other week now, but an hour a week or so with everybody in this church that wants to come over and study the Bible together. You can pick what you want to study. You can pick what you want to go through. Maybe you want to go through a book in the Bible. Maybe you want to go through a subject in the Bible. Maybe you are having a personal issue and you just want to know what the Bible says. Maybe you want your marriage to be better. Maybe you want to be a better father or a better mother. It does not matter to me. All that matters is that we sit down together and open up the Word of God because now we have a perspective for ministry. You are going to find out who I am, I am going to find out who you are. You are going to find out how serious I am, and very frankly, I am going to find out how serious you are. That is what it takes for ministry.

The Bible says, "Prove all things," and I do not ever ask you to prove anything to me that I am not willing to prove to you. It is a two-way street. That is what it takes to really perfect the ministry. The real key to David's life and him being the shepherd that God called him to be was those foundational years in his life. When he was out there all by himself, tending the sheep. That is where he built his relationship with God. That is where he got alone with God in those foundational years while he was watching his father's flock and then having a relationship with God and learning the process of being a shepherd. We are going to talk about that in a little bit greater detail here in just a little bit.

The real key to your success in your Christian life will be the same foundational years. God is not going to put you out on a field someplace watching sheep, but He will put you in a church where you have a shepherd that can help you understand how to pastor sheep, how to work with people, and how to learn the concepts of life.

A couple of weeks ago we talked about a great verse in Amos 3:3. I said it was not only a great statement but it is a great question in the Bible.

*Amos 3:3*

*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

The ministry is people like a church coming to an agreement, coming to an agreement that we are going to commit ourselves to do the work of God and then through the process learn how to accomplish that in our life.

Proverbs 25:19 is another great verse. You do not have to turn to it, but you want to look at it later. It goes right along. It says:

*Proverbs 25:19*

*Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*

The point being, in both cases, when you eat and when you try to walk, you cannot do it because of the fact that you have a broken tooth and you have a foot out of joint. Unfortunately, many

times that is what hurts the ministry: too many broken teeth and too many feet out of joint. That is the thing that hurts the ministry.

David's early years, we see God developing all of these areas in his life that in time are going to make him not just the shepherd of the sheep but the great shepherd of the nation of Israel and God's people.

SEC: God's Choice: Looking at the Heart

A verse I do want you to turn to is over here in 1 Peter chapter 5. Let us look at this real quick here. If you do not have a Bible this morning, that is fine. You can just follow along and listen to me and look on with the person next to you, do not worry about it.

In the Bible, the Bible talks about five different crowns that you and I can get at the judgment seat of Christ. There is a lot of information on the judgment seat of Christ. The judgment seat of Christ is the place where God judges you and I, not because of our sin. That was taken care of at Calvary. But we go to the judgment seat of Christ because God is going to judge us as to our service and what we did for Him. As I say many times, God is not going to hold me accountable for what I know or what I do not know. God is going to hold me accountable for what I could have found out but chose not to. That is the judgment seat of Christ.

There are five crowns in the Bible. We have talked about them before on Thursday night and probably on Sunday morning. These five crowns are what you and I can win at the judgment seat of Christ, the rewards that we will get. Each one of them stands for a specific thing. One of them is found in 1 Peter 5:1-4, and it is called the crown of glory. Let me read it for you starting in 1 Peter 5:1.

*1 Peter 5:1-4*

*1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:*

*2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;*

*3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

*4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

An elder in the Bible is someone that has been around for a while that really has an understanding of the Bible. An elder is someone who has grown up in a church, and he or she—there are women elders in the Bible too. It is not an office like a deacon or a bishop. It is more of a designation. You have men and women; they grow up in the church. They have been around for a while, they know their Bibles, they have a working knowledge of the Bible, and they are designated as elders in the Bible. Elder in a sense, not that they are old and decrepit, though they can be elderly in age, but elder as far as having a good handle on the Word of God, knowing the Bible.

Here he says that we ought to feed the flock. An elder in the Bible is an overseer. That ought to be the goal that everybody in this church wants to get to. An elder, the Bible says, is an overseer. He helps the pastor oversee the flock because the bigger the church gets, the more people it takes to kind of watch over people, and we will talk about why that is important in a moment. That is the job; that is what we ought to be doing. My job is to reproduce myself into you, help you become everything that God wants you to be so you can help me. As our church grows and we keep moving on and we keep doing things and God blesses us, He is going to require more people who have an understanding of the Word of God.

Notice it says here that you are to take the oversight, not by constraint. That means that I do not ever want to have to come up to you and put a hammer lock on you to get you to do what is right. When you grow properly, you do it willingly. When you understand through the foundational years what the overall goal for you in your life is as a Christian, you do it because it is the right thing to do, not because somebody put a double hammer lock on you and squashed you on the floor until you say yes.

Then it says, "not for filthy lucre," that is money, "but of a ready mind." That is my job; my job is to get your mind ready. My job is to help you get a ready mind or get your mind ready to understand the thing. "Neither being lords over God's heritage." How many times have you been in churches and you can always tell who the head guy is, or you can always tell who the guy thinks he is in charge? He always runs around; he looks like a peacock with big feathers sticking out. He is always running around, ordering everybody what to do. In reality, he has no power or no authority to do anything. But he likes the people; some pastors like to lord it over their people. I have seen pastors that just keep their people as down as much as they can. Every sermon they preach is just to beat them up so they can control them. They will do all kinds of things, say all kinds of things. I have even seen pastors that would pit one person against another. He would tell this guy, "Hey, you have got to watch Fred over here." And then he would go tell Fred to go watch Sam. He would say, "I do not trust Fred, I do not trust Sam. Sam, I do not trust Fred." So you two do not know that we are talking; you guys are watching each other. That is how he controls it.

In David's early years, we see where God was developing in him. Then he says this in 1 Peter 5:3, "Neither being as lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples." Notice it did not say "example," it said "ensample." There is a big difference there. Because "examples" in the Bible, the word "example" is something that you do. The word "ensample" is not what you do, but it is what you are. What he is saying there is that you cannot do this without being what God wants you to be first. I am not interested in your abilities and what you can do. I am really interested in what you are when it comes to your relationship with God. I am not worried about the example you are to God's people, but I am worried about the ensample you are to some people. I want you to not only do what you need to do, but I want you to be what you need to be. That only comes through the foundational years.

David learned to be the man after God's own heart. David learned to be the shepherd that God wanted him to be by not just being the example, but he became the ensample. He not only did the right things, but he became the right things in those early years. That is why I am telling you

your early years that we work together in the Bible, and those years can be two, three, four, maybe even five years, they are the key to you becoming the overseer and helping in the ministry as God has called you to do.

Now, let us look at David as the shepherd. Take your Bibles again and turn to 1 Samuel 16. I have told you before that in the Bible, you have what you call the law of first mention. Usually the first time somebody shows up in the Bible, or something shows up in the Bible, it is usually the definitive passage. When you come to David's life, this is the first full-blown expose of David. This is a great place for us to start to look at David as the shepherd. As I said, that ought to be your goal. Your goal as a child of God, if you are saved this morning, ought to be that you are going to enter into that process that you become everything that God wants you to be, that you can be that undershepherd, that overseer, that God wants you so desperately to put into your life.

What we have here is this: I need to explain a little bit here. We have had King Saul, and he has been a failure. King Saul was obviously not God's choice; he was man's choice. He has been a terrible, miserable king. Now God is going to get His king, and His king is going to be David. What you have here in 1 Samuel 16:1-13, we are not going to read it all, we will pick it up in about verse 6. What you have here is David being called by God. What I want you to see here is the process. It is an incredible study. I want you to see how God looks for a man, what God looks for, how God views the whole process. I want you to see the underlying foundational stuff that God looked for in David's life, because I will tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, it is the same thing that He is looking for in your life and my life.

Let us read it here as we come down.

*1 Samuel 16:6-7*

*6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.*

*7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this." Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by, and he said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen this." Again, Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said unto Jesse, "The Lord hath not chosen these."

Here is what has happened. They are going to call a king. He goes down to the house of Jesse, who has seven sons, really has more than seven. Surely Samuel thinks, "I can find a man for God who is going to be the king in this guy's house because he is a great guy." One by one, Jesse's boys pass before Samuel, and the Lord is standing on Samuel's shoulder saying, "That is not the right one. Nope, not him either." In time, all the boys pass.

*1 Samuel 16:11-12*

*11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.*

*12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.*

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up and went on to Ramah.

Father, we ask you to bless our time today. Perhaps you are going to take the rest of this message and this text, Lord, and to show us what we have today. We will thank you and praise you in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it, Amen.

After reading this passage and our introduction that I gave you on those foundational years in your life and David's life, we are ready to see some things about David now that I think are great parallels to you and me.

The first thing I want you to notice, and you cannot miss this, this had to stick out already. I was hoping that while I was reading this, you were listening to some things there, and it is not on a piece of paper in your own mind. The first thing I see here, and this is kind of a troubling thing, but it is the first thing I see: not everybody has what God is looking for. Did you notice that? He had seven boys pass before him, and none of them had what God was looking for. That tells me something. That tells me, and yet there is nothing wrong with these kids. The Bible does not say, but it did not go into any detail, but as far as you know from the account there, they were good boys. I do not think that Samuel would have even went there if they were not good boys.

What was it that seven boys did not have and one boy did? Why is it in some places with God's people, God will use some people, but He will not use somebody else? Why is it that some people have what God is looking for and some people do not? You find the same thing with Abraham. That is another incredible story. The Bible says when God found Abraham, He looked out through the whole world to find one guy who would want to be His friend and only found it in one.

Not everybody has what God is looking for. That is one of the great reality truths of the Bible. Yet at the same time, I am going to tell you, it was not because God did not want to use them. It was not because God said, "I am not going to use you, but I will use you." He said that, but there is always something behind the scenes because God wants to use everybody. We need to decide this morning, and it will help us. It will help me be a better Christian, help you be a better Christian. We need to decide and look at this thing and find out these things: What did God see in the one that He did not see in the other seven? I think it is instructive.

Ever wonder why God uses some people? It is a simple principle. I will tell you the bottom line: they did not have a foundation that David had. Remember a while back, we did parenting classes, and I told you how to train up your children and all of that. I told you that your children go through four phases, and as a parent, you need to be on top of your children in these four phases.

- > *The first phase was the discipline stage or the fundamental foundational stage where you discipline them.*
- > *The second stage was they moved in in time as they grew into the relationship stage.*
- > *Then as they got a little older, they moved into the fellowship stage.*
- > *And then as they got a lot older and moved down through life, they went into the responsibility stage.*

I told you that your child is going to go through those four stages. Your job as a parent is to recognize those four stages, recognize what stage you are in right now, and bring them from stage one to stage two, to stage three, to stage four. The last stage of responsibility, that should be the older your child gets, the less you should have to tell them what to do. They should pick up after themselves by the time they are three or four. In a perfect world.

Casey, how old are you, Casey? 14? By 14. I already know what you do because I keep tabs on you. Your sister said, you are really a good girl. Pick up after yourself, cook stuff at dinner, work the car, cut the grass, trim the dogs. You do good. No, there must be another Casey.

When you get to the point of your life as the older your kids get, the less responsibility you give them. They have got to handle it better. You know why? When kids are, and I know you are a good girl, I am not just playing with you, but you know why when your kids get 15, 16, 17, or 17 anyhow, 18 they can do what they want to do, but in those years, you have got to beat yourself over the head because you missed out on the first two stages of it. The first two stages are discipline and relationship. Building those two.

It is the same thing with Christians. I look at you, you have kids, and now your children are not they? Well, you are God's child. The same process that God gave you for your children, the same process He uses for you. The fundamental discipline years of your life as a young Christian focus on two things:

10. Discipline

11. Relationship

That is my job. This is your job as a parent. It is my job as your pastor. My job is to make sure you get everything you need to have the discipline in your life and then teach you about the relationship in your life.

Listen to what I am saying and do not take this wrong. You need to be an ensample as a shepherd, as an overseer. You need to be not just an example, but an ensample. This is very important. The reason why you need to be not just an example, but to be an ensample, not what you do, but what you are, is because, let me put it in a parent's concept first. A parent needs to be an example to their child and an ensample because when a child is growing up, you put them into that discipline stage when they are very young and then you move them into the relationship stage and then right on down the line.

Now, here is the problem. A child at three months, four months, five years old, six years old, seven years old, maybe even eight years old, they do not understand all the concepts of God. Oh yes, I know they pray and it is cute when they pray, but you have heard some of their prayers. They are praying for their goldfish, they are praying for their hamsters, they are praying. You are teaching them the concept. That is good, but the content is not there yet. God looks at that and loves it. Do not misunderstand it. When I see my grandkid down there praying and they are praying for everything in the world and all that stuff, I look at that and I think, "Wow, that is really great. They are learning the concept." In time, they will learn the content.

Your kids growing up cannot understand who God is. They know the concept of God. They go down there in elementary and they teach them about God and they put picture puzzles together and they make kind of stuff like that and they have an idea about God, but they are not in a relationship stage with God. The only God they can fellowship with is you. You are their God. Do not take that wrong. God is living inside you. You are all of God your child is going to see. In fact, the reason why so many kids mess up down the line is because the God they saw in those fundamental foundational years was the wrong one. That is why. They need to see in your life, not only an example, but an ensample.

It is my job to help you do that. It is my job to help you work the kinks out. Nobody is perfect. Everybody makes mistakes. I have certainly made them in my life and you will too. It is okay. I do not care where you have been, what you have done, what you are into. All I care is right now, where do you want to go and what do you want to do? You have children who in that young fundamental foundational stage, they are susceptible. They understand the concept, but they do not grasp the content. You are the content of God for them.

Now, let us put it back in our ministry here. Young Christians are the same way. You get some young Christian that comes in or some person comes in and just gets saved. They do not know anything about God. They know nothing about the Bible. I give you to work with them. You are going to disciple them. You are going to work with them. Or maybe they are having some problems they do not understand God. They do not see God. They do not grasp the concept of God or the content of God. All they see is you. They are going to see God or not see God in your example.

As a parent, you raise that kid up through the discipline stage and the relationship stage. What you do as they grow. What is the next stage? What is the third stage? Fellowship. Once you establish them in discipline, establish them in relationship, then you bring them through and you establish them in fellowship, not only with yourself, but with God now. You introduce them to God because they have come through the process. You were the conduit. You were the pipe. You were the person that God used. What they saw in you is what their concept of God was. You work that and bring them right into fellowship with God.

As a discipler, as a counselor, as an overseer, as an elder, they only see what they see of God is what they see in you. My job is to get you to get your eyes off the person that you are working with and in time as you work through that and you develop into the fellowship stage, you build your own relationship with God. Some of you call me up on the phone right now and ask me

every question about life. It is okay, that is my job. That is what I get paid for. I get paid by the piece, keep calling. Because you have not yet learned how to do that. Do I want you, maybe you are 20 years old right now, do I want you when you are 65 still calling me? No, I want you to learn through the process to stand on your own two feet so you can take a part of this ministry and help somebody else. But I never want you to stay where you are at. It is a constant case of redefining yourself, a constant state of looking who you are, where you are, what stage you are in and letting people help you get to the next level. But it is the foundational stages that are crucially important.

Old Mel Sabachan, my man that taught me the Bible. You ever wonder why God uses those and uses some people sometimes? It is not because He does not want to. I used to hear it every time he preached. I used to hear it all the time. He had a voice that sounded like two broken gears grinding together, you could never miss it. He would yell at the top of his voice, "What is wrong with God's people? Why are they not in ministry? Why God will not use you?" I heard it over and over and over. Sometimes I sit up in bed and scream it out in a hot sweat.

It was this: God never sends green troops into combat. You know why God will not put you into ministry? You are green troops, you are recruits. You never get out of basic. People never got in basic. You stay green, and God is not going to sacrifice you on the altar of ministry because He knows you are going to get killed in a heartbeat. He never sends green troops into combat. It is not what you know about the Bible that God looks at, but it is what you do with what you have that God looks at.

The Bible says in Hebrews 5:14, he is talking about people that God has not used or will not use or cannot use. Then he talks about those in verse 14, he says:

*Hebrews 5:14*

*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

That is the process. My job is that this is nothing more than an exercise class. It is a co-ed aerobic, spiritually speaking. It is a thing where we all exercise our emotions, our souls, our spirits, and we all work out and stretch it. Some of you are on a bench pumping out 500 pounds. Some of you are just starting with a little weights on it. Some of you have those little barbells where you are picking them up with your fingers, and that is all you are doing, but that is okay. It is all right, we do not care. Nobody is going to walk over here and make fun of it because you are just picking up baby barbells. The fact that you are doing something, that is the key. You will get the weight on as you exercise. You will pick up the weight, you will learn how to do it. You will learn most importantly through exercising your senses to discern both good and evil.

I will tell you another thing. This is true of so many churches. God will not give you any more than you are willing to take care of. God is not going to give you people that you are not going to be diligent with and work with them and be there for them. He is not going to.

I think one of the greatest tragedies in the Bible was Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Here is a guy after Solomon died who had a chance to pick up the kingdom and go on with it. He had a chance

to get back and keep this thing going. But in 2 Chronicles 12:14, it talks about Rehoboam and it says this:

*2 Chronicles 12:14*

*And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.*

That is the basic underlying problem. One, you will not get a ready mind, you will not get your mind ready. Two, you will not prepare your heart to seek the Lord. It takes preparation. That is what David did. That is what he did. These boys are no good to God, not because they are bad guys. Why God cannot use them? They have no experience of being shepherds. I do not know what they were doing, but they were not with the sheep. God is looking for a young man's heart that wants to shepherd His people, and they learn how to do that by taking care of his father's sheep. When those boys come by, God says, "Cannot use him, cannot use him, cannot use him, cannot use him." Why? Has no experience with the sheep. No experience with the sheep. It is an incredible principle.

Look at 1 Samuel 16:11-12. I think I made that up. I did, but watch, I can make it work. Look at 1 Samuel 16:11-12.

*1 Samuel 16:11*

*And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.*

There are the magic words, "keepeth the sheep." That is what he was looking for. All these boys come along and he says, "Is this all you have?" And he said, "No, there is one more, but he keepeth the sheep." "That is him, that is him, that is him." A man with experience, a man with experience. A man who has exercised his senses with the sheep. You have to be taught how to be a shepherd.

Did you ever catch 1 Samuel 16:12 down there? Look at this.

*1 Samuel 16:12*

*And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.*

Did you ever catch the similarity between that verse and Song of Solomon where it talks about Christ? David looked like Christ because he had been with Christ. God's people are going to find him. God found him a shepherd. God found him a shepherd.

SEC: Lessons from the Shepherd and His Flock (Continued)

There are some interesting things about being a shepherd. It is a science and a study all into itself. A number of years ago, I was out in Montana, and I was preaching to the church out there. One of my boys was pastoring the church, and out there, they do not have farms, they have ranches. Their ranches run 600,000, 700,000 acres. When they go out, they are gone for days. It

is a regular old chuck wagon deal. It is incredible. I got to go out, and one day they took me out, and I rode out on a horse. There had been years that I had been on a horse, but it is an experience. I went out there, and I got to go on a cattle drive where they were driving the cattle. Then the next day they took me out, and they had sheep on the other side. I got to watch.

I will tell you, the greatest thing I have ever seen in my life working is a sheepdog. The most incredible things I have ever seen in my life were sheepdogs. I talked to this old shepherd. This old boy, he had been around forever. He was your sheep guy. He was a sheep guy. I was out there, he is a saved man, loves the Lord. He came to church, and he said, "Brother Bob, I will tell you what." He says, "I sure have enjoyed your preaching." I said, "Well, I am glad you have." I said, "Let me ask you a question." I said, "How long have you been doing this?" "I have been doing these sheep for almost 50 years now. So I know every one of them." I said, "Tell me, I said, you know, in the Bible, Christians are likened to sheep." He said, "Yeah, I know that." He said, "I have seen some characteristics." I said, "Would you, if you like what I taught you, teach me something." I said, "Tell me about sheep."

He says, "Well, those sheep are the dumbest animals you ever saw in your life." I said, "Amen." He said, "What did you say, preacher?" I said, "Nothing, go ahead." He says, "Sheep get lost real easy." I said, "Really? How do they get lost?" He said, "Three reasons, just three reasons."

12. They get curious and stray off from everybody else.
13. Those sheep will eat right here. Then they will think that there is more grass over the hill. So they will stray over the hill and get on another pasture and get lost that way.
14. They get scared by wild animals and those animals scare them off.

I said, "Well, tell me about your job." He said, "My job," he says, "My job is to watch over the flock." I said, "Well, tell me what you do." He said, "Well, first of all, 24 hours, seven days, I live out here. I have a few people to help me, but he says, then they have been good enough to let me off to come to church so I can hear you preach." He says, "I am out here all the time." He lived out in there, and he got one of those little trailers, you know, you lived in one of those wooden things, pulled by horses or whatever. He has got a little campfire out there. He just stays out there 24/7. He said, "It is a 24/7 job."

He had, believe it or not, I did not even know he still had in the Bible, he had one of those shepherd's crooks that come over and bend over like that, and hook up at the top. That thing was about seven feet long. I said, "I cannot believe with all the modern technology, you still use one of those big old sticks." He said, "Yeah, it is a crook." I said, "Yeah, there are those in the ministry too." But I said, "Well, tell me about your stick." He said, "Well, you use this for sheep." He says, "You know, see how it has got that thing on the end?" He says, "Sometimes those sheep need a gentle nudge to get back in line." I said, "Amen." He says, "Sometimes when he gets too far out of line, you notice about seven feet long. So with that crook, you just reach out there and put that crook on her neck and lead them back in." He says, "You never use the crook to hurt the sheep. You just use the crook to keep them in line."

"But when a wild beast comes in or a wolf comes in or a coyote comes in and you are out there by yourself, you do not have your pistol, your gun." He said, "That crook is your tool." He says,

"Not only does it bring the sheep in, but it is long enough that you can stay off the animals without them getting in close and whipping them to death." I guarantee you, this guy had whipped some to death in his lifetime.

He said, "The biggest problem is sick sheep." I said, "Why is the biggest problem sick sheep?" He says, "Because when sheep get sick, they want to get out from the herd and not be with the herd anymore and get off by themselves." I said, "Amen." I said, "You just told me the way Christians are." Because when somebody starts coming to church and somebody starts getting involved, you see them on Thursday, you see them on Sunday, and you do not come for a while, or you do not hear and they are not there anymore, and nobody knows where they are. You know where they wind up? They are sick, and sick sheep do not like to be around healthy sheep.

What in the world is that all about? I am telling you, God picked the greatest animal in the world that they are likened to us, Christians. That old boy taught me more that day than I have ever learned. You know what else he said? Of course, in the Bible over there in 1 Peter 5, it says, "the chief shepherd shall appear," that is Christ. He says, "Those sheep are not mine." He says, "I just get paid for watching them." He says, "Now we are going to go down here," and he says, "and come fall," he says, "we keep these sheep healthy, we protect them." "Then the cattle we take down there and we slaughter and we sell them to market. We do not do that with the sheep. We just take them down there and when they get good for wool, we take them down there and they shear off the wool and they bring them out next year." I said, "Oh, so what you are telling me is that the sheep are not yours, they belong to the chief shepherd, but they give their wool to him." That is Romans 12, a living sacrifice. He is the shepherd, we are the sheep. He does not want us to die for him. What he wants is to sacrificially give our wool. You ever go over there in Proverbs 31 about the virtuous woman where she is working with the wool with her hands and the flax?

The next great principle you find in here, and this is one of the greatest passages in the Bible, is found back there in 1 Samuel 16:7. The Lord says this:

*1 Samuel 16:7*

*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

That is one of the greatest verses in the Bible that shows you what God is looking for. I have learned over the years, we use it all the time, "never judge a book by its cover." That is so true. I never look at the outside of people. I never look at their abilities. I never look at what they purport they can do or all of that, because the real matter is what you have got on the inside. It is nice when you find somebody whose talents match up to their heart, but you do not always find that.

I found in the ministry, it is usually like this: the people you think are going to make it and are going to really help you out. I remember when I first came to Kansas City, years ago, and I flew into KCI and I got hired at a church to be a youth pastor. I was only 20-some years old back then,

just a kid. I will never forget, I flew into the airport and this kid picked me up, who was in my Sunday school class. They had him come out and get me. This guy drove me back in, and back then, the airport was not any farther than it is now, but it was not anything between it. We are driving back there, and I am looking around, I am thinking I am really out west. I never forget, they put me up here at Benjamin Stables up there, it is not there anymore. I got a hotel up there, and I never forget. I get up early in the morning, get ready for church, walked out on the balcony, it was a November day, it would be a week before Thanksgiving. I walked out there, and I kid you not, two guys on horseback went riding by, and I am thinking, "Well, I am out west, am I not?"

He is coming back and he is telling me all these things about what he is going to do and this or that and all this stuff, and I am thinking to myself, "Wow, this kid, I just got this kid alone, we can win the world to Christ. I do not need anybody else." After that kid picked me up, dropped me off, and I got settled in here and got moved back here and got going and everything, I did not see that kid in church probably two times the rest of that year. It is never the ones you think it is going to work, at least in my experience it is not. It is the one you do not think is going to make it that makes it. It is the one everybody else looked at and said, "Ah, forget that."

My little black lab Tinker, best lab in the world. Best lab in the world, better than the other two. I know I told you Buddy was my favorite, but I was just lying in that mess. She is the sweetest dog lab, she has the greatest personality. She will do anything for you. She is the sweetest dog. She would not mean anybody. She loves kids. She lets kids ride them, pull on her tail, she will do whatever she wants to do. She is 12 years old, she is going to die someday. Every morning I go down and keep my fingers crossed. I do not find her dead down there because she is really old now, but she is the best dog in the world. She was the last one of the litter that nobody wanted. She was the runt. Everybody took all the beautiful dogs. I will never forget, Barb brought her for me for my birthday, and I walked around the thing there, and I think there was another one left. I walked around there, and the other dog was over here, and I walked around there, and I thought, and then came this little black thing, running around the townhouse, pale wagons, he trotting over to me, and I said, "That is it right there." Dog has no ear canal. Born without. In most places, they would just kill that little dog right on the spot because it is not good for show. By birth, she had no hole going down her ears. It just closed completely up. I do not know what, it is just there. In fact, we had to have surgery one time because she got a big abscess down there, and the doctor said, "I have only seen this two times in my whole world." She has no ear canal, nothing in there. This is great. Not great for you. I have got to pay you \$3,500. Why do not you take off some money off the bill looking at the ear and saying, "I will rate it."

Greatest dog in the world, but it was the runt of the litter. Nobody else wanted her. It turned out to be the best dog in the world. That is so true in life. That is so true in life. The ministry is a constant state of redefining. The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his countenance. Do not worry about how tall he is. Do not worry about how well he is in all the areas. Look at his heart." That is what I am looking for. Your life and my life should be in a constant change of redefining and reevaluating and coming to the point that we are always looking where we are at and how we can better do what God wants us to be. That is the importance of those formulation years. That is

the importance of the one-on-one. That is the importance of spending time, helping you learn the process through the fundamental years of who you are in defining yourself, defining yourself.

#### SEC: The Ministry: Redefining and Reproducing

Every church should be in a constant state of redefining everything that it does. I always am. I do not like just to do it because we have always done it. I think every church has to constantly redefine what it is doing. I think that is the problem in churches. They get stuck in a rut. They just keep doing it the same way. It does not matter if anybody benefits from it or not. It is just the way we have always done it.

I think churches ought to keep as uncomplicated as they can be. I think they ought to run naturally. I think the natural approach for every church, it should have three things going for it.

> *Self-sufficient. I think a church, if it is going to be a church, then the people of the church ought to make it fly and financially ought to take care of it with their tithes. They are offering it in their sacrificial giving. I think the leadership ought to come up in a church. The church is that, say, "Well, we need this guy to do this. So we are going to call down here at some Bible college and hire so and so. We have got a great kid down there." I think that is the greatest affront to a man's ministry. The first thing a pastor ought to do when he takes a church is look out there and try to find somebody that can be his replacement and build up leadership from within, absolutely.*

> *Self-propagating. What do I mean by that? We do not have big ads in the newspaper. We do not have a big sign out front with electric lights on with arrows pointing in. The greatest signs we have are sitting in this room this morning. The greatest signs we have and the greatest outreach we have is men and women in this church who have gotten their lives touched by the Word of God and what God has done in their life, and then you tell people that work about it, you tell your friends about it, you tell your neighbors about it, and you simply just say this, "Come and see, come and see." They come in, and sometimes they like it, sometimes they do not. It is okay, but that is what a church ought to be.*

> *Self-cleaning. It ought to be one like those new ovens you get. When it is dirty inside, you just turn the switch and it cleans itself. A church ought to be self-cleaning, and this church pretty much is. I think God has His own process of elimination. We already know from when seven went through with Jesse, not everybody is going to make it. My job is to give everybody that comes to this church that has a serious want to do it, to give you the best shot you can have. But at the end of the day, it is your choice.*

I cannot make, I talk about attitude in action, your attitude produces your action. There is another little concept in there, and it is called change or adjustment. Most people do not want to change their lives, they just want to adjust their lives. They do not want to change about them what they have got to change, they just want to adjust it.

I had a lady that came into church a couple of months ago, a young gal, nice girl. She called me on the phone, came over to my home, and she said, "I am tired of the way I am living, I am tired, I have got this problem, this problem, this problem, this problem, this problem, this problem, this problem." She had a lot of problems. I said, "I will tell you exactly what we need to do, and we

can fix this thing. I will show you what we do, we will get a plan in your life, we will get this going, I will get these people working with you." It was just down, down, bang, bang, bang, bang, done it a thousand times before. She comes for about two or three months, starts feeling better, gets back with her boyfriend, they get their buddies again, and all that stuff. Suddenly, my friend, my guy, my gal is calling her on the phone and saying, "Hey, we missed you." She said, "I have got all I need out of church right now. I really do not want to go any farther than where I am at right now, this is where I am at, I do not want to go any farther than this." She got feeling better, she did not change her life, she just adjusted it to her situation. Now she is feeling better. Six months from now, a year from now, if your life tailspins into the ground, we are still here waiting for you. That is just the way it works.

I had another lady come in, and she had some serious issues, and a number of you ladies were working with her. When she came in here, the first time I met with her, she told me exactly what her heartache was, what she wanted to do, and what she wanted to accomplish. I said, "You have come to the right place, I can fix that problem in a heartbeat." So I picked out 10 or 11 of you hotshot ladies in here that have a handle on it that just can do everything for somebody like this. As the weeks rolled on, she would come over and see me, she would complain about this person, she would complain about that person. She would say, "I do not like this person. I do not like that person. This person did this, this person did that." After about the fourth time coming over, I said to her, "Hey, I am running out of ladies. You are working down the list, I have not got many more ladies to put into your life until you realize it is not them, it is you that has got the problem." She did not like that, and then she left. Here I have nine ladies who have worked with me for what, five years, worked in all kinds of scenarios, and you are the problem? But that is the way some people are. You have got to love them. It is okay. Last thing I said as she slammed the door, "Please do not slam the door." No. Last thing I said, "Hey, if you ever, ever, ever really want to fix this, you come back and we are ready to go." Maybe she will, maybe she will not.

My job is to give you the best shot. I cannot do it for you, I cannot make things happen, I cannot change the thing, I can only show you where it needs to be. That is what it is all about. I am here to help you. I am here to help you get a ready mind and prepare your heart to seek the Lord. The reason we do that is through the fundamental things in your life and those years of building it wherever you are at.

I see so many of God's people when they come in that even though maybe they are very worldly in one sense and they really have a lot of issues in another sense, the bottom line is when I see that first crack of light of God in their life, I see an innocence in them that needs to be cultivated. Or maybe they have been around the block four or five times and have all kinds of issues, but when their first crack of God's light comes into their heart, I see an innocence in them. An innocence that can be cultivated into a great relationship with God. Those years are crucial. Those years are crucial. The larger this church gets, the more it is going to take men and women who are overseers, who take the responsibility, who understand what it takes.

Next year is our fifth-year anniversary. I know it is not a long time, but it has been a good time. But in preaching this message this morning, I can honestly say this. If you look around here and you have been around four years or more or something like that, maybe even three years, I know

so many things have changed. We have redefined ourselves, people come and go. But I want to say this to you. The leaders that are here today that make this thing happen, the people that I have working with people, helping me with this, helping me with that, the ones that have come up through the middle, and I am just like, "Hey, you all could have been there."

I was watching that movie, "Gods and Generals." What a great thing. I did not know that was a trilogy. Do not you know what a trilogy is? A trilogy, yeah. Do not mispronounce it, it is a trilogy. Do not make me look bad in front of everybody, but the trilogy is a trilogy. What did you say it was? Trilogy. That is right, good. He is wrong up here, he laughed, he scoffed. A guy with a haircut like that, I would laugh too.

I will tell you, it was an incredible thing, and I watched that, and I thought to myself, "Wow, that is exactly so much what all this is happening going on in our world today," and I looked at that, and I thought to myself, "What an incredible concept of how these guys really had a love for God in the process of what they were going through in life." I am telling you, you can have everything you want.

I was thinking as I was watching that about a Civil War story of a saved man. He was on the Confederate side, his name was Peter Appelman, and there is a book out about him, he was an incredible guy. Peter Appelman was about six foot seven, and about 250 pounds, and they are down there, and they are shooting down at the Yankees, and they are shooting back up, and it kind of got quiet for a while. Old Peter Appelman said, "I am going to go down there and get me one of them Yankees." So he crawled over the parapet, and he is going down through there, and he jumped down in the trench of the Yankee side, and there was a guy turning around, and he got a fist about as big as a ham. He just popped that guy and threw that guy over his shoulder and started going back up, and everybody is shooting at him, and his own guys are shooting back. Peter Appelman came up there, and his commanding officer came up, and he threw that Yankee soldier down there, and everybody was standing around, and their eyes were bigger, and he says, "There is that there, Yankee." He says, "You all could have had one. A whole bunch of them over there."

You all can have part of the ministry. It is just some guys are settled to stay in the trench, undercover, some guys are willing to stick their neck out to go get some. It is that simple. This is not just my ministry anymore, it is yours. Many of you have learned to love it, many of you have learned to love it like I love it. Many of you learned to love the book as I do, the ministry as I do. But the bottom line, people come and go, and the leaders today that are making this church happen basically are the ones that one on one have got the issues in their lives worked through and the foundational who found out my heart, found out the ministry, had a place where they could ask anything and get whatever they needed to know to make it happen.

It is not just my ministry. I tell them you do not want to get into the ministry. I want to be very honest with you. Because the ministry can be painful. It can be. People say nasty things about you, and some of you do not like that. People lie about you, some of you do not like that, some of you do not deal well with conflict. But the bottom line is this, I have always likened the

ministry to having a baby. Most of you have had babies in here, women. There was a time in America, you did not have to quantify that, but you do today.

You carry that baby for nine months. I will tell you what, all the time you go through it. I looked at my little Jamie the last couple of weeks, last couple of months, I felt like I needed to have a wheelbarrow and just hold under her stomach. I did not even want to look at her. Not because I did not want to look at her, but because it just looked so uncomfortable. Her feet would swell up. I walked down the stairs the other night, and she is sitting down there, and I am saying, "Who is that?" "Jamie, that is both of her." Her feet were swelled, her face was swelled, terrible. Then we go to the hospital. Some of you ladies have been in some terrible labor. It goes on and on and on. Then you have got to go through the process of having that child and all the things that goes on there. It is not a pleasant thing to go through it.

But no matter how painful it is, no matter the nine months that you carry, when you hold that little baby in your arms, and that doctor lays it down and says, "Boy, she is a beautiful little gal, or he is a sweet little guy," and you look at that little face, and you hold that little baby, you forget all about whatever pain you went through in the last 12 hours or the last nine months. It is gone. All of the bad things, all of the hurt, all of the pain have been absolved in holding that little baby in your arms. That is the fruit that God has given you.

In a minute, you are just like that. You better learn that. You have people that are hard people, and people that give you tough times, and people you struggle with, and people that try to hurt the ministry. But in many ways, it can be painful. But it only takes one little guy or one little gal that says, "Boy, I really want to learn the Bible. Oh, I just want to learn it." And you just hear them go, "I know it is four o'clock in the morning, but I had this question about the Bible, and I am going through it today." It only takes one person. It only takes one person who, and you just forget about all the rest.

You have got to focus on what the ministry is. The ministry is taking young Christians, being a shepherd to them, overseeing what they are going through, helping them, redefining where they are at, helping them have better marriages, taking a wife and teaching her how to be better to her husband, or a husband, how to be better to his wife. Taking the process where you just take, help them with their children, or help the children, or help whatever they need, or just teach them the Bible. Give them those foundational years that David had that made him the great shepherd, not just for the sheep that he watched for his father, but the great shepherd of the nation of Israel.

What God saw in him? He did not see any other boy? He saw a shepherd's heart. That is what God looks for. He looks in your heart. He does not look on the outside. He does not look at the stature. He looks for your heart. He looks for you when you look at somebody and you say, "I would like to help them. I would like to be able to be there for that. I would like to do that. I would like to be part of that. I would love to teach that person the Bible." That is where it comes in. That gets built in those formative years. Those foundational years, those tender years in your life. That is what David learned. Next week, and the week after, we are going to look at David as David's king and David as God's man. We are going to see that process that that is what God used when David got in a tight spot. Let us pray.