

Romans 8:23-28

Sunday 2/15/2009

I guess by now you are probably beginning to see how impacting Romans Chapter 8 is in our lives. I guess probably it is for what it contains, as far as the doctrinal material, it is probably the greatest single chapter in the Bible that contains so much for you and for me. The whole book of Romans is an incredible book, as you know, as we have been working our way through it.

But in Romans chapter 8, I told you the other week, as many of you have had the experience, we could be in Romans 8 for six, seven, eight months. There is just so much material in here. Last week, we were coming through a portion of it and we got into the millennial reign of Christ. Remember, I told you that Romans 8 breaks itself down into four sections. You have to have these sections somewhere in your Bible, either at the beginning of chapter eight or breaking it down however you go through it.

We talked about verses 1 through 14. We preached our way through this and we saw how it was a great practical section. We looked at verses 15 through 22. I told you that Romans chapter 8 is a great chapter that deals with the redemption of our body. It talks about the fact that there are two adoptions, one spiritual and one physical. The second section in verses 15 through 22 deals with that spiritual adoption, the day you got saved, basically.

The third section is where we are at right now, and that is verses 23 through 32. That deals with the physical adoption, and everything in that passage has to do with Christ coming, establishing the millennial reign of Christ, and you and I getting our glorified bodies to the point where we become just like Christ. It is an incredible aspect. Then in the fourth section, verses 33 through 39, it deals with the total victory that we have in Christ as a child of God in light of everything else that we have studied in Romans chapter 8. It is a great passage and we will have a great time with that.

It was in this third section that you remember we were talking about the second adoption. The second adoption in the verses we were looking at the last couple of weeks had to do with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the establishment of the millennial reign of Christ. We took a Sunday and we talked about and defined the millennial reign of Christ, just like we did the rapture before we started chapter 8, so you would have some kind of context.

Then we began to look at the great aspects of the millennium. I told you how that Ezekiel chapter 40 through chapter 48 were the great passages in the Bible that really lay out the millennial reign of Christ. Then I talked about Ezekiel chapter 47. We talked about how that in the millennium the water of life flows out from under the throne of God. It comes down and goes into the desert and then moves out. We talked about how Ezekiel was told to walk through this river or into this river, and from his ankles to his knees to his loins, and then to what was basically over his head. I took that and gave you a great example of a great defining passage in the Bible that really helps you understand how you walk in the Spirit, how you continue to grow in the Spirit of God, walk in the Spirit of God. This river flowing we saw as a picture of the Holy Spirit of God and you and I moving into it, coming to the point where we become more like Christ every day of our

lives and accomplish more for Him as we get more into Him and all the things that God does for us.

I want to look at verse 23 today and we are going to move on down through some of this, but 23 is still in our third section here and it says this:

Romans 8:23

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

That verse goes right along with what we have talked about. Remember, I showed you in the last section when we were talking about the millennium, one of the things that we talked about is how that the whole earth gets liberated. Not only do you and I get our glorified bodies and do we get liberated from the bondage of this flesh, but the world gets liberated. The world is under a curse because of Adam's sin, and that curse has impacted the world in natural disasters and all kinds of problems and circumstances that really mess with the world and just give it all kinds of problems.

We talked about the animals, the animals being liberated. In the millennial reign of Christ, we talked about Isaiah chapter 11 and where the whole creation groans, and how that the animals get liberated. In the millennial reign of Christ, a little baby will eat a lion and there will be no more meat-eating animals. They will not be carnivorous. They will not be wild anymore. Everything will be under subjection to the Lord. We looked at that, and that is why it says in verse 23, "And not only they," the animals and the creation, "but ourselves also," you and me, "which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

That is such a true statement. If you are a good Christian or you try to be a good Christian, you know as well as I do that this whole world is a real struggle for us. There probably is not a day in your life that you do not get upset with yourself about something. There probably is not a day in your life that you do not get discouraged with yourself because of the fact that we fail God; we all do. The real child of God, the closer you get to God, the more you build your relationship with God, the more you are focused on pleasing Him, and the less pleased you are with yourself when you mess up from what God wants you to do.

People ask me all the time, "If you become a Christian, are you telling me that a Christian can just go out and do whatever he wants to do or whatever she wants to do and they can still be a Christian?" Let me just say this to you: the mark of a true Christian, I cannot tell if you are saved or not, I have no way of knowing. The only one I can know for sure is me, and I worry about me sometimes. But when I look at you and I see me and I see us and our struggles and everything in our life, the truth of the matter is the more you should be like Christ, the more you become like Christ, the less you are going to want to do wrong that disappoints Him.

I cannot conceive in my mind of a Christian that would get saved, build a real good relationship with God where you are becoming more closer to Him and you walk with Him and everything that you do with Him, and still enjoy going out and just do what the world does. The two do not

compute. No, the more you become like Christ, the less you want to do the things of the world. As the Bible says, "we have groaned within ourselves," every one of us, if you are saved this morning, every one of you out there that may be struggling in life with something or you want to get to the point where you have areas in your life that you know you have got to work through and work on that every day, "we have groaned within ourselves."

Then He says in verse 24:

Romans 8:24

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

I want to explain the word "hope" here. Look at verse 25 too, because He uses it again and you want to get this in your Bible; this becomes a confusion for people.

Romans 8:25

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

The word "hope" in verse 24 is not a thing where you hope you are saved. No, it is not used that way. It is used in the sense that Jesus Christ is our only hope. That is the way it is used. It is not used in the sense that, "Gee, I hope I am saved when this thing all comes down, I hope I am found saved and in Christ." No, that is not what He is talking about. It is talking about that our only hope that we have is in Jesus Christ; He is our only hope.

Verse 25 talks about that same hope, Christ. Our hope is completed when we get our new body, and that is what He is talking about. When we get our glorified body, that hope that I have in Christ, not that I hope I am saved, but that He is my only hope, will be realized when I get my glorified body. You need to put a little note in there because it shows you how that verse is used. Many times young Christians will read that and they will say, "Well, you said the word hope. Does that mean that we have to hope we are saved?" No, it is more important than that. It is talking about that Christ is your only hope, and the hope for me today is the fact that maybe today I will get my glorified body, and that is what will end this struggle that we are all going through, the groaning within ourselves.

These three verses basically deal with the completeness of our salvation. I say that and explaining it the way we did when we came through it. Right now, and remember I said this and I will say it again, just so I clarify it, right now, your soul has been saved. Right now, your soul is saved. But you still have your old flesh. You still have the body that you have to deal with every day of your life. You have been adopted the first time spiritually. What we are waiting for is the adoption of my body, and when that happens, my hope will be complete. Of course, that is what He is talking about. The salvation of our soul is right now. The salvation of my body is when the rapture comes and Christ comes back and gives me my glorified body.

I. The Holy Spirit and Prayer

Then I want you to look at verse 26, 27, and 28, and this is where our message is today. This is where we are going to start today, and again, we are going to start with another great defining passage that is a much-needed subject in our lives. I told you Thursday night that we are going to get into the passage of Romans chapter 8 that talks about our prayer life and what prayer should be and how you better understand prayer. Let us read it in verse 26:

Romans 8:26-28

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

This is another great definitive passage, as I said, that deals with the aspect of our prayer life. You remember a while back, I told you that the Bible lists three separate infirmities that we all struggle with. In fact, I think I preached a message on it. You will remember that I talked about Romans chapter 6 verse 19, where it talks about the infirmity that we have in our flesh. I took you back to Psalms 77:10 and I showed you there that we have an infirmity of forgetting what God has done for us. Then I brought you to Romans chapter 8 verse 26 and I talked about the infirmity that we all have where the Bible says that we simply do not know how to pray as we ought.

I guess that is probably the single greatest absolute truth that I have ever learned about prayer. I know beyond any shadow of any doubt that as a human being, the hardest thing for me to grasp is the concept of prayer. There are so many aspects to it that we as God's people do not know today. My goal is to help you have a better understanding of it. Those three infirmities that we listed there, I can guarantee you, every problem we face can be traced back to one of those three or multiples of those three.

I always enjoy, and I kind of call it going on the record, so to speak, on a crucial issue. We have talked about prayer on Thursday nights. There have been people that have questioned about it. Some of us have talked about it one-on-one. But when the opportunity presents itself like this, that we can openly take the time in a definitive passage in the Bible that we can really lay it out and document it, that we do not have a time factor, that we can take three weeks, four weeks, whatever it takes and completely exhaust what the Bible says about this, that we can better understand it. I think that it is a great thing.

Remember the last three weeks, we took three weeks and talked about defining your spiritual growth. We turned over every stone. We looked under everything in the Bible. Now you should basically have that at your grasp to be able to help yourself. The next couple of months, we are going to deal with a heresy within the church called Calvinism. I want you to understand what that is. We are going to go through that in great detail because you are going to be talking to people, dealing with people, and you are going to be finding people that are hung up on that bad

teaching. You need to know how to deal with it. Romans chapter 8 is just loaded. So today, we are going to begin to talk about the aspect of prayer.

II. The Importance of Archiving Biblical Material

In my own personal life, what I have done over the years, and I know you think that I have a photographic memory and can memorize all this stuff and keep all this stuff, and that is simply not true. What I have done is found a very workable system for me. I encourage you that are going to really learn the Bible at some point, that you do the same thing. What I have done over the years is I have built me basically an archive of Bible material.

You will go into most pastors' libraries and you will find a wall in his office as long as this and filled with books on it. There are books that I guarantee you, there are books that he has, but he has never read. There seems to be an idea that when you go into a pastor's office, the more books he has, the more you think he knows what he is talking about. That is not necessarily true.

I have found over the years that most of the material that they have on their shelf, and one of the first things I do, by the way, is when I go into a pastor's office or even I am invited to your house at some point, one of the first things I do is if you have your books displayed out there, I look at the books you read. I look at it just because, one, I may find something in there that I would like to read. So later on, when you come downstairs and cannot find it, it is because I borrowed it. There may be a little card in there that says, "I will return this someday, somehow, someday."

If you would see where I work and if you would see where my laboratory, as I speak, where I do all my stuff, putting together, you would not find four or five thousand books. You would find probably a hundred, maybe 150 books. You would find a lot more tapes. What you would find is, over the years, that I have archived material that I think to myself, "This is exactly what I need to always remember." Some of those you will find in book form. Some of those you will find in just small pamphlet forms. Some of them you will find in tape, and I will have them marked. There will just be a segment of a tape that will define for me a particular thing in the Bible that I want to have at my fingertips if I need it.

If I want to brush up on something in the Bible, and my notes do not suffice me, then I know right where to go to pull that book, pull that tape, pull that pamphlet, to sit down and have it exactly what I want, without having to wade through a bunch of stuff that does not mean anything to find what I want. I will catalog those things in a notebook that I can just go to my notebook. You want to find the millennium? Here is the material you want. You want church history from a quick standpoint? Here is the material you want. I have found that archiving that material in my own life has really helped me deal with a quick reference on any issue in the Bible, and any person in the Bible, too.

I have found a number of books over the years that are invaluable. Some of them, they will have every person in the Bible. You cannot put a value on a book like that. They do not write books like that today. A quick reference that if you are putting a sermon together or you are doing a study, and there is a guy by the name of Rufus. Who in the world is Rufus? You can get a book

where you automatically, you can go through and go in its all-alphabetic order, and you find out what you need to know about this guy, Rufus, or whoever. Those kind of books are invaluable.

Every serious Bible student, anybody who is going to, in time, get a handle on the Bible, you are not going to remember everything that you study. You are not going to be able to put everything in your Bible that you need to have. You are going to have to come up with an archival system where you can archive this material, get it at a ready reference glance, and get it where you need to get it.

Lessons like this that we are going to talk about on prayer, lessons like we taught last week, and when I teach, I do not know if you have even picked up on my method, what I do. When I teach, I teach in that kind of format, because many of the times I will use those things for my own personal deal to put them in there if I have not exhaustively taught on them before. Many of them I already have in my Bible. But you take the subject of spiritual growth. You will never get any more material in any more concise way than what we did the last three weeks. You take those three tapes or however many they are, and you archive them. Of course, when I was doing it, we did not have CDs. When I was coming up in it, cassettes were just coming into their own. I mean, I still remember eight-track players. You guys do not remember those things, but I still have one. But you take that material and you put it where you can get your hands on it. You label it. Of course, for prayer, it is the same thing. This will be a definitive lesson on it and it will help you in everything that you do. The true Bible student will have to build their own library of material.

III. Understanding Biblical Principles and Doctrine

I think the way I deal with it, when I study a subject or I want to get a subject down, and a lot of the way I teach you is the way I study myself. I think in dealing with any subject, you need to get the misconceptions out of the way first. The lack of Bible doctrine in our lives and in life in Christianity has not only produced some real heresies within the body of Christ, but it has produced a ton of misconceptions. This is why God's people are so shallow today. I have never seen a time in my life when God's people are more shallow when it comes to the things of the Bible. I am telling you, I have never seen a time where God's people had more misconceptions about things in the Bible.

What was standardized 100 years ago for the church to believe, now many of the things that are looked at by people today that are Christians, they do not even believe them anymore. Many of the crucial concepts and principles about your life and my life and the Bible and how we do things as Christians has been lost today. I told you last week that the key as a Christian for your success in ministry or whatever you are going to do for God was simply learning and then executing the basics. The basics representing the principles of God. My ministry is based on that concept.

Take your Bible and turn back to Isaiah. I want to show you something here, so you get an idea of where I am coming from. Isaiah chapter 28. We have talked about this before, but I want to show you how important it is. I just do not want to stand up here and teach you the material

because I know I have got Bible students in here and most of you really want to learn the Bible. So I do you a great injustice if I just give you the material without giving you the model by which you find the material, because my goal is not for you just to come and get it off of me all the time. My goal is for you to develop yourself in your life where you get to get this material for yourself.

Look at Isaiah chapter 28, talking about Bible principles. You hear me say a lot about Bible principles because the principles of the Bible are what keeps you from messing your life up and getting hung up out there in something that you think may be right, but in actuality has nothing to do with God, and it happens all the time. Now look what He says here in verse 9:

Isaiah 28:9

Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

You see that? That is the number one goal in your life and my life: understanding Bible doctrine. The word "doctrine," and I have told you this many, many times, the word "doctrine" means to teach. You need to learn as a child of God what the Bible teaches about every issue in life, every subject in life. That is why I will drive you nuts, I will bug you up one side and down the other. It will be every other word out of my mouth will be biblical principles or a biblical doctrine. That is the only safe way to walk with God and build your life is based on that.

Isaiah 28:10

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

You know what He just told you? He told you the way to learn Bible doctrine is by precept, that is a principle, upon precept. Line upon line, you take the basic principles that I give you about everything that we talk about, and those principles, when you put them together, will form and make Bible doctrines. The principles are the key aspect of your life. I do not care what you do in life. I do not care what you attempt to do in life for God. It has to be run by the principles of God or you are going to mess it up. I do not care what you do. There has to be a right way, ladies and gentlemen, and there has to be a wrong way, and there will never be two right ways. There will be lots of wrong ways, but there will only be one right way. That right way will be based on biblical principles, and the way you get that as a young Christian is you let me teach you.

You want to get to the point where you understand doctrine, and right now you are still leaning on the milk. But the way you get to that point is to take precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little. What does that mean? It means you get some on Sunday morning. It means you get some on Thursday night. It means you get some in your discipleship. It means you get some and you go into the different classes you go to. You add to that why it is so important for so many of you young guys to get into this class that Scott is teaching, just like it was so important for some of you ladies to get into the one that Barb taught. It is the beginning and the assemblance of Bible doctrine and Bible principles, and what Scott is going to do, what he is going to do is giving you the principles of life from which you are going

to build doctrines. You are going to do it here a little, there a little, and in time you are going to grow to the point where you get past the milk and you become everything that God wants you to be when it comes to the Word of God.

Remember when you were in school, grade school way back when? Remember when we were in grade school, if you will notice that in every school, a teacher told me one time that there was a design behind this, I do not know if he was just telling me that or not. But you remember in every school classroom you have been in, you know what they have around the top of the classroom? The ABCs, it is standardized. There were two things you could always count on when I went to school: the ABCs were across the ceiling on the top of the board and a half-finished picture of George Washington. They never finished the an bubba. He is just from here up. It did not make him look any better if they would have finished it, but that is what I remember from school.

Now you are saying that is all you get out of school? Pretty much. Anyway, remember how you, now if I would give you a piece of paper today in every one of you and I would say, "Write me an essay. Write me a hundred-word essay on your relationship with Christ." And I would get them back from you. They would probably be pretty good. But what would be amazing is how that you have an ability to use words and those words you form sentences. From those sentences you form paragraphs. From those paragraphs you form ideas. From the ideas you lay out and put together all kinds of communicational concepts where you can write a thesis paper.

But you know where it goes back to? Your ability to write theses or reports or do extenuated writing where you put it in some kind of form. You know where it started? All the way back with your ABCs. It started all the way back when you were just a little tyke and you went to school and you went A, you got them out where you made a big A and a small A right next to each other. Then you made small, once you got them down and you went through the vowels, A, E, I, O, and U. You learned how to do that. Then you took the words and you made very basic simple words. You took the word C-A-T and you made cat. You took the words, you took the letters and you made very basic little words.

Then as you grew through that, you did the next step is you took those basic words and what did you do? You made sentences out of them. It was not incredible sentences. It was not like anything that you would read today or write today, but it was things like, "Tom saw the cat." "The cat saw the dog." "The dog ate the cat." Basic little things like that. Then as you went through first grade, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade, by the time you were in fifth, sixth, seventh grade, you could take those basic little words that you got from those basic little ABCs and you could form very good sentences with them. By the time you are probably in junior high, you were required to do book reports, maybe before that. Now you were writing a little extensive essays about this or about that. You would read a book and you would take from the book and what they call reading comprehension and you would write down what you comprehended from the book and you would put it out into an outline or a book report or a thesis or some kind of writing that explained your ideas. Many times they were very detailed and very incredible.

How did you get to take and speak that elegantly or write that good? How did you get to that point? The same way you will learn your Bible. You got there by taking the ABCs of the English language, making words with them, and then taking it to the point where in time you could write sentences, paragraphs, and just about write whatever you want to write. The Bible is the same way. The precepts are the ABCs, the principles are the sentences. Once you take the ABCs and learn how to put them into sentences, spiritually speaking, what you form when you add them up is an understanding and a teaching of some specific thing in the Bible, which is called doctrine. That is the same way that you do it. It is just that simple. There is no magical formula to it. Just like you learned to read and write and you learned to be able to do the things that you do, you have to learn that process spiritually.

Nobody just gets saved and says after two or three months, "I got it." Nobody says saved after six, even a year and says, "I got it all figured out." Nobody does that. That would be like you in the third grade going up and saying, "Well, I am going to write my own Declaration of Independence and it will be better than the one they got." You do not have the tools wherewith to do that, and neither do you as a young Christian.

When I was a kid, I started playing the trumpet when I was probably in fifth grade. By the time I got to junior high, I was pretty decent. By the time I got into high school, I was a pretty accomplished trumpet player. It was a situation where when I was a junior in high school, my band director said to me, "You know what? You are really a good trumpet player, but you could be a lot better." He said, "What I want you to do is this. I have a friend of mine that his whole career is that he takes trumpet players and he takes them and he has turned out state champion trumpet players for I do not know how many years. This guy really knows how to take out of you what is really the good and mold it into the point where he makes you an incredible trumpet player." I said, "That is fine. That is great."

Of course, the guy's name was Wayne Rigger. Wayne Rigger is dead now, I am sure, because he was old back then. This is back in the 60s, late 60s. Wayne Rigger was a very accomplished trumpet player. He was an incredible trumpet player. He took his specialty was taking young men and young ladies and taking them where they were. As good as they sounded, the technique had to be worked on. There were certain things that he instilled in you that maybe at a glance you would not see it, but after you were with him for a year, you could hear the difference because of the things that he would teach you in the basic concept.

When I went in the first time, he said, "Well," he said, and I had never met the guy before. I go in there and we talked for a little while and he said, "Well," he says, "I will accept you." He said, "What I want you to do," he says, "I want you to get a book that I have written. It is a music book that we are going to use in our studies." I am thinking, "Oh, great, this guy had wrote the book. I can get this book down and get it and I will be a great trumpet player." I said, "It is probably some fantastic book that has just everything in it and all the secrets." I paid him \$2 or \$3 for it. It was not. I looked at it, I thought to myself, and I walked out to the car, "This is ridiculous."

You know what the name of the book was? It was called The Talking Trumpet. It was a little stick guy with a trumpet on his head. Every page Talking Trumpet spoke to you in a little caption. All

this book was, all this book was, was the basic fundamentals of the trumpet and trumpet playing. I went home and I thought to myself, "What is this?" Then we go, and I went in and I thought, "Boy, I got this down really good." I went in to play for that, that was terrible, terrible. He says, "Let me play it for you." And when he played it for you, I thought, "Whoa." Now what did he do that I did not do?

You know what he had me focusing on? He said, "Every note you are playing, play one note, 'da,' too long, 'da,' not long enough." He says, "You want that note to be absolutely in its duration, the same of every other note you play." I am thinking to myself, now I have got to tell you the end of the story. We did not get along very well. He kicked me out after a while. You know why? I just never had the self-discipline to "da" instead of "duh." I just never did. I could not discipline myself to what is really the key and put it all together.

I will tell you what, my problem why I was never a great trumpet player is because I never understood the theory behind it. You heard William play here last week, and it is very obvious that William understands the theory behind music. I bet you could get into a, you could hook up with a band right now, and if they started playing a song, you could pick up your sax and join right in and not have to ask what key it is, not have to worry about it, and probably never miss a note in the thing. That is what a great musician does. You know why? Because he understands the theory behind the playing of the trumpet. He understands key changes. To me, key changes was going down to the hardware store and having some new keys made. He understands modulation, how you move into, if you are going to go from one key to another, you have got to modulate by doing something that blends it in. Because if you start playing in one key and the next first jump up to another key, it sounds terrible, unless you understand the theory behind going from one key to another key.

I never understood the theory. I could play the trumpet, but I never understood the theory behind playing the trumpet. I did not want to discipline myself for that stuff because I thought to myself, and I have got to tell you the truth, I thought to myself, "That is so stupid. I play the trumpet well, and I play it good. I sound good. I can just about do anything that I want to do with it, except stuff that I will probably never really want to need to do." My downfall was the fact that you are not a good trumpet player or any other musician unless you understand the theory behind it. I was never willing to discipline myself to learn the theory.

I said all that to say this: some of you are like that with the Bible. You know the Bible. You are pretty good with the Bible, but you do not know the theory behind the things in the Bible. It is not enough just to know the Bible. Do you know why you believe what you believe about the Bible? I was a good trumpet player. You give me a piece of music and I could read it. I could sight-read fairly well, but you put me in a situation where that I had to change keys and do all of this and do all that without having somebody tell me what I needed to go to and just know it and feel it and see it because of everything that everybody else is doing. I could not do that. In that sense, I was very limited in my ability to play the trumpet.

I will be honest with you, in everything in my life, everything, everything in my life, I was only willing to go as far as I wanted to get out of it. You know why I never learned the theory?

Because I was president of the band. I sat first chair trumpet. I felt like I had it. Why do I need to go through that hard work to get the other stuff when I am doing okay the way I am? But that was my limited perspective. Most of us, many times God's people are the same way. They think, "Well, why should I really get to that depth in the Bible? Well, I know the three spiritual laws and I know this and I know that. I have been around now. I know a lot of things about the Bible." Yeah, but the bottom line is, do you know the theory behind it?

What I am getting ready to say is the fact that prayer has a theory behind it, just like everything else in the Bible. Because it is that lack of theory that has put up some real misconceptions in God's people's minds about prayer. In other words, there is more to prayer than just asking God for something. There is more to prayer than just sitting down and telling God what your needs are. There is a theory behind prayer.

Now let me take the word "theory" because I know the man, and I say that based on our modern-day use of the word "theory." You think like the evolutionary theory where a theory is something that cannot be proven or something that nobody knows for sure if true. I am not using the word "theory" in that sense. I am using the word "theory" in the sense of a general exposition of general principles about any subject. In other words, when I talk about music theory, I am not talking about the same way I say the theory of evolution. The theory of evolution is in that word, the word "theory" and the way it is used means that it is uncertain, nebulous, so to speak. It is a proposition, it is an idea that somebody put forth. When we are talking about music theory, we are talking about understanding the dynamics behind music that makes music work. That is what I am talking about when it comes to prayer in the Bible.

IV. Misconceptions About Prayer

So before we see what prayer is, if we are going to do this right, before we see what prayer is, it would be helpful to see what prayer is not. I want to take some misconceptions about prayer. I want to show you whether or not in the Bible, and I want to set a pretext from where we are going to go or a pretense, not a pretense, pretext.

The first thing I want you to understand about prayer is prayer in unsaved people. This is a terrible misconception. Turn over to John 9:31. This is a terrible misconception and you need to know what is wrong before I can teach you what is right. Otherwise, it is going to get all jumbled in the middle. I want to eliminate the bad stuff so when we finally get down to the bedrock stuff that we have got this stuff taken care of.

John 9:31

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

The first thing you have got right there and the first thing you have got to get out of your mind and get it straight on is that God does not hear the prayers of unsaved people. That is a terrible misconception today. God does not hear the prayers of unsaved people. That somewhat bothers us to some degree, but here again, what I have just given you, this is my point. You may want to

think that God does. You may even have thought that God does. You may desperately, because of your own scenario or somebody else's scenario, hope that He would, but the principle, the absolute principle of the Word of God says:

John 9:31

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

That is the principle on it. It does not require interpretation. It does not require your opinion on it. That is a principle. Now you will either accept that principle and move on, or you will look at that principle and say, "No thanks," and move away. That is that simple. God does not hear the prayer of an unsaved man.

Why is that? You are in John, turn back one chapter to John chapter 8. Look at verse 44. Here is the reason:

John 8:44

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

What the Bible is saying is this, and you have heard this is basic 101, but just for the people here that maybe are new or people here that have just come into our church, let me just briefly tell you what we have got here. We know that there are two spiritual families in this world. When you were born the first time, you were born as a sinner. You were born in Adam's fallen image. As you were born as a sinner, you bore the image of a sinner, and that is being born into the devil's family as a sinner. That is why the Bible says you have to be born the second time. That is why the Bible says we have to be born again. Your first birth puts you into the devil's family. Your second birth, when you get born again, takes you out of the devil's family and puts you into God's family.

I preached a message on this years ago about "you are of your father the devil." I basically told the people, "If you are here tonight and you are unsaved, you are in the devil's family." Nobody likes to hear that. I had a woman come up, actually came up at the end of the service, I do not know if she was saved or not, she may have not understood. She came up and she said, "Well," she said, "I want you to know," she says, "I did not appreciate what you said about unsaved people being in the devil's family." Because that sounds pretty, I mean, I have got to admit, that is pretty radical stuff. I mean, you might say to an unsaved person, "Well, you need to be saved," or, "You know what, I am praying for your brother or sister," or, "You know what, if I can ever help you." But just to look him in the eyeball and say, "You know what, if you are unsaved, you are in the devil's family and you are his child." Whoa, that is rough.

So she came up to me and she was obviously visibly upset. She said, "I want you to know, I took great offense to the fact that you said that we were in the devil's family." I said, "You know what, I understand. When I first heard it, I took offense too, but you know what I did? I got so mad, I

changed families." I said, "When I heard it the first time, I was living." I said, "You know what I did? I got so mad, I simply changed families. You do not like it? I have got a solution for you, ma'am, just change families. Just because you got born into it, does not mean you have to stay in it. I said, I got out, you can get out."

As an unsaved person, God does not hear our prayer. Why? Here is the problem. We talked about in Romans chapter 8, verse 26 and 27, what we talked about today. When we opened our verses here, and we found that the key was the Holy Spirit of God. The indwelling Holy Spirit of God inside you is the one that makes intercession for you in your prayer life. You do not think that you just, when you pray to God, that you are just like picking up a cell phone, do you, and dial a number? No, somebody has to take the prayer that you initiate in your heart and takes it up before the throne of God. It is not like picking up a phone and saying, "Hey, God, are you up there?" No, it is like that the Holy Spirit of God who lives inside you takes that prayer and takes it before the throne of God and actually makes intercession for you. An unsaved person does not have the Spirit of God. So there is no way.

Let me say this, and I have got to clarify this because I know my terminology is not good, but it is the best way I use it. I say God does not hear the prayer of an unsaved person. Obviously, He does. That is not a contradiction. It means that God knows everything. I mean, I am out in my front yard and I have got some people across the street, got little kids. Those little kids are out there at their plant. Then I am in my house, and I am in my plant. Then I am in my front yard, there and in your yard. And mom and dad are in the house in the backyard or someplace, and that kid starts yelling that he wants a drink of water. Do I run over and get him a drink of water? He is not my kid. You see, I heard he wanted a drink of water, but because he is not my child, I am not going to get him a drink of water. God hears the prayer of an unsaved person, but there is no response to it in that sense because you are not His child.

Now, let me show you two more great principles on it. I know what people say, I have heard them say all my life, "Well, I disagree, Bob. Before I was saved, I was in a jam in my life one time, and I asked God to get me out of this jam and God answered my prayer." Well, let us see about that. Let me show you the principles on it. Now, we are going to have to go back, and we have to go back to the book of Ecclesiastes. Let us go back to Ecclesiastes chapter 9. That is in the Old Testament. It is right after Psalms, and it is right after, then Psalms, you have Proverbs, then you have Ecclesiastes. So I kind of give you a wider perspective to find it.

Ecclesiastes chapter 9, look at verse 11. Here are the principles on it. You want a principle? This is how God operates. You can either accept it or not accept it.

Ecclesiastes 9:11

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

You see what you got there? He is saying that in many cases, it is time and chance. Now, there is no time and chance for a Christian. Everything is set up, and God has got it orchestrated because

the Holy Spirit of God has a plan for you. But the unsaved man, unsaved woman has no plan, other than to die and go to hell. An unsaved man's life and an unsaved woman's life, it is time and chance.

You know how some people get killed when you are an unsaved person? You know how you get killed? You will be getting in the wrong place at the wrong time. Chance, chance. I mean, I got reading about this plane that crashed into this house wherever it was last week, and what a terrible tragedy that is. Here it is. Here is a plane that has got 49 people on it, plus its crew. It is coming in to land, and it crashes in a house. Now, I do not know if these people in the house are saved or lost. I am just going to say for the sake of argument they are lost. Maybe they are not, but it is not a judgment on them. I am going to use it as an example. That plane took off, and that plane was flying through a populated area trying to land, and it got ice on its wings, and it could.

Let me ask you a question. Why did it pick that house? You know there were houses all around that house? How come it hit that house? You know, in that house, there were three people, a husband, a wife, and a 21-year-old daughter. You realize the 21-year-old daughter came out with just scratches. The mother came out a little worse for wear, but she was all fine, but the dad got killed in that house. Now, who decides all that? You see, if you do not know the theory behind the Bible, then those things produce a dilemma for you.

Now, I am not saying that they were saved. I am just, maybe they were, and it would be another scenario. I am using this as an example. Let us say that the pilot was saved, the people in the house were unsaved. Let us just put in that scenario, because there are plenty of scenarios where they are all saved, but I do not have any recollection of what I need, but this one is a good one. It is still fresh in our minds. How did that plane pick that house? Did God pick that house? Did God say, "Hit that one?" Did God say, "You two die and you live?"

The only involvement that God might have had in it, staying with our scenario that everybody in the house and everybody in the plane was unsaved, the only scenario that God may have had in the thing, if there were saved people living around there, and God said, "Do not hit them, hit him." But let us say the whole town is lost. Let us say there was not anybody saved, living in there with a 10-mile radius. That is probably true, known in where the world is today. The Bible just told us that time and chance happened to them, because God does not recognize anything that goes on. It is like that when Adam sinned and was an unsaved man, the automatic lever switch of destruction, and if you are as an unsaved man or an unsaved woman, if you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, or many times in the right place at the wrong time, time and chance happened to them all. I do not know what to tell you. There is no rhyme or reason to it because the world operates at its own pace. The world operates by its own system.

Now, if you are a child of God, there is no time and chance in your life. You do not die by chance. You do not die by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Bible says it is appointed for you to die. God knows everything about you, and when you die, you can rest assured that you did not die without God knowing and was not there at the time it happened. Now, maybe you died because you were at a fellowship with God and God chastised you. Maybe

you died because God wanted to get all the glory out of your life. I do not know, but the bottom line is, for a child of God, there is no time and chance. For an unsaved man, it is all up to chance.

Look at the next verse. Look over here at Ecclesiastes chapter 3, verse 19, just back a couple pages. Look at this. This is how God looks at unsaved people. You have got to remember, the book of Ecclesiastes is all talking about things on this world, the way they operate without God involved in it. Look at 3:19:

Ecclesiastes 3:19

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

See that thing? He just told you that an unsaved man living and dying is like an animal as far as God is concerned. Why? Because he is in the wrong family, and he has never changed families, and he is not God's concern. Why? Changed families, and he is not God's child, so God has no preeminence over him.

Now, somebody says, "Well, you know what? I was in the," and I had a guy tell me one time, he said, "Well, you know what?" He said, "I heard what you just said, but," he said, "I was in the war, and when I was in the war, I was in a situation, and I was in a situation where I did not think I was going to get out of it, and you know what? I prayed, 'Oh God, get me out of it,' and I got out of it." What do you do with that? I said, "Well, first of all, just because you got out of it does not mean that time and chance was not involved. Because we already know the principle."

You see, I guess this is what I have got to get down to you. It does not matter how you feel about it. It does not matter how you rationalize it. It does not matter how much you want to believe that God hears an unsaved person, the principle clearly says that He does not. Now, you can go the rest of your life overriding that principle, or you can accept that principle and work from there. I told the guy, I said, "Well, you know what? Time and chance. The fact that you prayed and you got out of it means absolutely nothing when the principle says, first of all, God did not hear you."

The other aspect is this. Maybe somebody else was praying for you. I have had situations where an unsaved man said, "I am praying and praying and praying, and God delivered me." He thought his prayer did it, and then you talk to mom over here, and mom was on her knees almost the exact same time praying for her boy. God did not answer his prayer, but He honored the mother's prayer, for the mother was saved. See how the thing works? There is a theory. There is more to prayer than just opening your mouth and asking God for whatever.

V. God's Grace and the Theory of Prayer

Now the real shocker. Here it comes. Not only does God not hear unsaved people, but I am about to show you now, and this is where we set the preface for where we are going. I am going to show you why God does not hear 99% of God's people's prayers.

Let me say this before we get into this, and I want everybody to listen to me. If you are a young Christian here, and you just got saved, or you are somebody who is trying to learn the Bible, do not not listen to what I am saying, but understand that where you are at in your life right now, God is covering your bases because of the fact that you do not have the ability yet to grasp everything I am saying. In other words, God has got you under a clause of protection.

There is a time in your life, you know what I found? I found studying back there when the nation of Israel came out of Egypt, and God knew that they were going to have to fight against some really tough nations, and they had just come out of 430 years of bondage of Egypt, and God knows that the devil has got nations out there that want to wipe them off the face of this planet. Do you know what God did? God took them another way for about six or seven months, and He kind of took them out of the way of all the people out there that wanted to kill them, so they did not have to fight for a while because God wanted to give them a period of grace to grasp themselves together, to get themselves organized, and to understand how God was doing and what He was doing before they had to meet their first foe. God will do the same thing to you as young Christians. God will give you some grace, and God will take care of you, honor your prayer, even when there are stupid prayers, because your heart is right. It is as you grow spiritually, and you get that thing where you want it your way, and it does not matter what the Bible says, where you start to have some problem.

I am going to make a statement here, and I believe it is a true statement. I think probably right now, 85% of you, maybe not quite that much, but I would say that 80 to 85% of you fall into that category. You are all young Christians, you really want to do what is right, you are in the process of learning the Bible, some of you are being disciplined, some of you are just finished the women's class, some of you are going to come to the men's class, and you really have a desire. I am putting you into that thing where God is going to take care of you and give you what you need, cover your bases for you, even though you may yet at this point do not know how to pray. He is going to cover you.

Me? There is no covering for him. I cannot speak for anybody, I speak for me. I have no excuse. I better know the theory behind prayer. In time, you better learn the theory behind it because there comes a time when grace wears out. I mean, I love the Raytown Police Department, you know why? Because they will not give a ticket to a man in his own neighborhood. Speeding ticket. I have been stopped nine times in, no, no, no, no, in 20 years. Give me a break, what are you laughing at? I have been stopped nine times in probably a year, 20 years. When they look at my license, I had them all say the same thing. They look at my license, and I mean, I was not going 100 miles an hour in a 35 mile, so I mean, but there are times you get, you know, like a days ago and he will pull you over and he walks up and I am right there right around my corner. He looked at my license and he said, "You live around here?" I said, "Yes, sir." He says, "You just keep it down." He says, "I cannot give a man a ticket in his own neighborhood. Just watch it."

Now, if I had been out on 350, if I had been out someplace else, I would have gotten nailed. Now he gave me grace. But if I tried the same thing nine times in the same day, after a while he was going to say, "I cannot do this anymore. Here, here is a ticket," probably the second time. If I

look up and I said, "Ha ha," and in my own neighborhood, he says, "Yes, you are. Here is your own ticket." Grace runs out after a while, in that sense. As you are a young Christian, you can get away with a lot of things right now. God will cover your bases because you are dumb, stupid, and you are ugly. Spiritually speaking. But as you grow, you are supposed to come into the image of Christ and be everything that God wants you to be. Then grace runs out. Then you have to, at some point, you have to learn the theory behind what you are doing. There is a theory behind prayer.

America now, as we know it, it has been almost over 100 years without a Bible. No truth will always lead to people getting bad definitions and bad doctrine and no principles. God's principles are no longer the rule of the day in most of God's people's lives. People actually think that if you are saved, God automatically hears your prayers because He is required by law. I do not know how many times I am asked a question, "Well, I was in a tough jam and I prayed and prayed and prayed and God just did not give me an answer." Then I have had other people say, "How did I get so messed up in life? I prayed every day of my life." That is because people have the idea of misconception, by the way, that prayer has something to do with closing your eyes, bowing your head, folding your hands, getting on your knees, position of your body. In reality, prayer has nothing to do with any of those things. Prayer has to do with the attitude of your heart.

I should not say you should not bow your head and close your eyes. We do that to respect. We do that out of respect. I think people come to the point that they think that that is the automatic prayer switch. You stand still, fold your hands, bow your head, close your eyes, take off your hat, and the moment you take that prayer position, God is listening. Well, I have got news for you. Prayer, the theory behind prayer has nothing to do with the position of your body, the closing your eyes, the folding your hand. Though I am not saying you should not do that. Do not do it while you are driving. It may be a tough time for you. Prayer, real Bible prayer has nothing to do with your position of your body, but everything to do with the attitude of your heart.

VI. The Tabernacle as a Picture of Ministry and Prayer

What I am about to do, ladies and gentlemen, is to lay this foundation for you. I am going to take another great type in the Old Testament, and I am going to illustrate the New Testament principle of the Christian life and prayer. If you want to follow along with this in your Bible, you can, but maybe you just want to sit there and listen because you are not going to be able to take the notes. Again, I am going to tell you, if you want the definitive work on this, Clarence Larkin's book on Dispensational Truth. In fact, there are a number of books back there that I was looking at this morning. There is one back there on the Tabernacle, which we are going to. There is one back there on the, there is a book out there, I do not know if we still have any more, called Those Irrepressible or Irresistible Jews. It is one of the greatest single little pamphlets that they. Those are the kind of things I find I put in my archives. When I need to brush up on it, it is all right there. It does not take a lot of reading, but all the information is where I wanted to get.

Back in Exodus, Chapter 25 through Chapter 33, you have a, remember in Ezekiel, Chapter 40 through Chapter 48, I told you there were the eight greatest chapters on the millennial reign of Christ. Exodus, Chapter 25 through 33 are the greatest chapters of the Old Testament context of

the Tabernacle. I got this up here today because I want to use this and I want to kind of hope everybody can kind of see it. I am going to try to do it this way where I can kind of get everybody to follow me along with it here. It has got to be a visual, and I am not pretending to be any kind of artist or anything. I just want to give you a visual here so you understand what we have got. So you get a visual of it.

This is basically your old Tabernacle in the Old Testament. What you have got is this. This thing was a tent. They carried it wherever they went in the Old Testament. Every time they camped, they set it down and they brought it. They had to put it back up and take it down again. When you look at this, you are going to find that if you get Clarence Larkin's book, he basically breaks it down this way. This place here was called the Holy of Holies. What is that? There was a veil across here and that veil, that veil, that veil was a picture of where God's throne is and where God is that no man can pass. Inside that thing was the Ark of the Covenant. I know you think that Indiana Jones got it, but he really did not. That was the Ark of the Covenant.

The high priest, the high priest, once a year, he would come through here. He would make the sacrifice. He would walk through here and he would go on the other side of that deal and he sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat right there. He would make an atonement for the nation of Israel. You know what that high priest is a picture of? He is a picture of Christ. Christ is our high priest. One time, see the high priest had to do it every year. One time, Christ, my high priest paid the sacrifice here, went in through here and went into that veil through the Holy of Holies and laid the blood on the mercy seat for your sins and for my sins. See how it works?

Now, that priest had sons. They had sons. Of course, the priest was Aaron. His priest had sons and the high priest did his thing in here where all of his sons they did the work all through here. What you have got here is this. This is what you have got. This is one of the greatest studies you will ever take. It is key to understanding every aspect of your Christian life, especially prayer.

This Tabernacle is a picture of your life and my life and our work for Christ. This thing here, this third compartment right here represents where God's throne is. The second compartment right here and the first one represents our work down here as the sons of the high priest. Those sons of the high priest, they had work that they did here every day. It is a picture of your life and my life in the ministry. If you want to understand ministry, you want to understand what God has called you to do and what He is going to get done through you, then you have got to understand this thing here. The ministry, the Christian life, this is the theory behind it. Do not get this. You will not be any great Christian like I never became a great trumpet player. Why? I did not want to waste the time to get the theory. I could play good. I sounded good. I could get by with it and I could make myself look good. But in actuality, if you put a test in front of me on theory, I would flop. This is the theory behind your Christian life.

When you come down through here, you are going to find that, and we are going to look at these. You are going to find you have a brazen altar. You are going to find you have a laver of water. When you get inside this second compartment, this is your ministry right here. There are three things in here that either make you or break you when it comes to ministry. These are the three things right here.

Someone with a loud voice, stand up and read for me. Find 2 Timothy chapter 3 verse 16.

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Read the next one.

2 Timothy 3:17

That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

You read those two words, "throughly furnished." All your Bibles will say "thoroughly finished." It is not "thoroughly finished." It is "throughly furnished," furnished, furnished, furnished like furniture. You know why? Because inside here where the ministry is, there are three pieces of furniture. When the man of God gets perfected for the work of God for the ministry, it is because of these three pieces of furniture and what they represent on the inside. So it is "throughly," throughly, throughly from the inside out, "furnished," not "finished." If you want a ministry, you want to be used of God. You want to perfect yourself daily in the work of the ministry for God. Then it is once you get saved, it is these three things.

We are going to look at them. I am going to read them up here right now.

1. The Word of God
2. The Holy Spirit
3. Your Prayer Life

Let us look at them. You have got three things here you have got to deal with. We are going to go back and put the whole thing in perspective.

First of all, we have got the brazen altar. That brazen altar, if you want to study it sometimes, found in Ezekiel chapter 27. That brazen altar is where it is made out of brass. You know why? Because it is a picture of God's judgment. That is where the sacrifice was burnt. The sacrifice was burnt right there. If you look just on the other side of that, you would find an opening going into that Tabernacle. That brazen altar is where the sacrifice of God was burnt and made. It is a picture of Christ's death on the cross. The brass representing God's judgment. The way that He placed that thing strategically right there is beyond belief.

This is the work of the ministry here. These three things are the furnishings that we need to have in our life. But you cannot get in here without coming through here. In other words, you have got to get saved first. You cannot get into the ministry until you get past the brazen altar where the sacrifice was made.

Once that priest, son of the priest, once he went in here, he went in and went out, went in and went out. He would do the sacrifice. He would go in, he would come out. He would work in here. He would work out here. You know what you have got right here? You have got a laver of water. On that laver of water, you have got seven spigots. You see, the Tabernacle had no floor in it. They just put it down wherever. When the priest and the sons of the priest walked in and out

of here, their feet got dirty. It is a lot like you and me having to live in this world, in this world, but not of this world. What happens when you go to work? What happens when you go out with your friends? What happens when you just generally get around the things of this world? I will tell you what happens. You get your feet dirty. Your walk with God gets tainted because we have to walk in this world.

Every time he came out before he went back in, he went over to that laver of water and he washed his feet. That is a picture of you and me getting in the Word of God. Before we try to do anything for God every morning. When you come to church, when you get up in the morning, when you go to bed at night, throughout your day, you ought to be in a constant state of washing your feet, making sure your feet are clean and your walk with God because of the dirt that we pick up in this world.

Once he goes in there, now you are on the, you are in the work area. The first thing I want you to see over here in the work area is right over here. This thing right here is called the, it is called the table of showbread. It is not spelled S.H.O.W., it is the old English word S.H.E.W. This bread was made fresh every day. That bread was made by the priest and it was put on that table and the priests were the only ones that could eat that food. They are the only ones that could eat that bread. That bread represents the Word of God. Notice it is on a table. The table represents the fellowship you and I have with the Word of God.

Three things to the theory behind ministry. One is the Word of God. That is right here, right there. That thing, notice it has, it has, it has 12 loaves of bread from the Old Testament standpoint. There are 12 tribes. So there is one from each tribe. Oh, but watch the Holy Spirit of God. Notice how it is laid out. One, two, three, four, five, six. One, two, three, four, five, six. You know why? Because whoever wrote that knew there was going to become a Bible that man should not live by bread alone. It was going to have 66 books in it. So you have got six to the top. You have got six in the bottom.

Now it is called the shewbread. You know why it is called the shewbread? It is on display. You know why it is called shewbread? It is because you and I ought to be a walking Bible to the world. What you and I take into our life, the ministry, working for God, it should not be what you have to say to people that make them understand you are a Christian. It should be what you show them. Shewbread, how you live.

We have got the Word of God. The second thing we have got down here is down here called the seven golden candlesticks right here, a candlestick with seven candles on it. When you look at this and you understand this, you began to see and you will find this in Exodus chapter 25 verse 31 and Exodus chapter 27 verse 20. The shewbread, we will find in Exodus chapter 25:23.

This candlestick of seven candles represents the Holy Spirit of God. Leviticus chapter 24 verse 2 says that these lamps are never to go out. They are to burn 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God in your life. Yet the Bible says that these lamps stand, and I love this. It is made of beaten gold. Now, why did it just say gold? Why did it say beaten gold? I will tell you why, because it is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God coming through the crucifixion

where He was beaten on that cross for you. That is why. So He puts in the word beaten gold, beaten gold.

I said these lamps were supposed to burn forever. There are only two times in your Bible, two times you find where these lamps go out. Only two, only two times. The requirement was that they go seven days a week, 24 hours a day. But you find two places in the Bible where there is no light. One of them is in 1 Samuel chapter 3, verse 3, when Israel is in the height of its wickedness. The second one is in Revelation chapter 3, verse 16, and the Laodicean Church age, the church age that you and I live in right now. The Bible says that that light, that candle is spewed out of the mouth of God. It burns with holy oil, a picture of the Holy Spirit of God.

When that priest is in here, doing his work, which is the picture of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God, the three furnishings we need in ministry. When that priest is in here, he is working all through here. But when he is working over on this table, he cannot approach that because the only light you have in there is off the Holy Spirit of God in those candles. The only true light you ought to have in your life is by the Holy Spirit of God. You see, when that priest is doing his work, if he comes around here and he stands in front of the table, he blocks the light. When he is in front of the book, he cannot see what he is doing because the light is behind him and he is blocking the light. In other words, when he does the work, he needs to go behind the table, behind the book, that he does not obstruct the light from the Holy Spirit of God that is illuminating that book.

You know what happens when you go to Bible college and they educate you out of your Bible intelligence? You know what happens when you get out there and do your own thing when the Bible clearly tells you to do something else? You are standing in front of the Holy Spirit, or you have got the Bible. But the problem is you are blocking the light from the Holy Spirit of God with yourself. You are not willing to get behind the table and let the light show you, you want to get in front of it. But when you get in front of it, then you have got to do it yourself. Absolutely incredible.

I do not know if you know it or not, but when you walked into here, you were out here, this is out in the daytime, see daytime outside in the cloud, the sky, bright sun, you walked in there and that thing is pitch black except for seven candles burning over here. That is a great, that is a great thing. Remember now, this thing represents ministry. These things are the three furnishings you have got to have: the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and your prayer life. This thing represents those three elements of the furnishings that you need to have in your life that perfect you.

Have you ever been to a place where you went to a moving picture show and you, you went in there and you were, you know, out there, bought your tickets, got your popcorn and then you are walking there. When you walk in, you are like, you are blind. You are like, you are blind. If you do not do something, you are going to spill your popcorn over the lady in the front seat of the guy sitting beside her. So what do you do? You stand still and what has to happen for you to be able to move on through that? Your eyes have to adjust to the light.

When that priest went into that second compartment, every time he went in, you know what he had to do? He had to stop because if he did not stop and he tried to operate when he could not

see, he would make a mess out of things. So what he did is he stopped and he waited till his eyes got adjusted to the light. You know what principle that is in the Bible? I will tell you, you want in ministry, you want to get into ministry. You want to do something for God in the ministry. Bible says in 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 6, "not a novice." What does that mean? You have got to know what you are doing. You have got to understand the theory behind it. So this priest comes in before he jumps in and does everything. He stands still and waits for his eyes to get used from coming to the world's light to God's light. That is why you need to have a time in your life that you go through an adjustment, that you learn biblical principles, that you learn that you do not jump in ministry as a novice, that you learn there are absolute principles that you have to put into your life. You have to operate by if these three things here are going to work into your life.

We have got the Word of God. We have got the Holy Spirit of God. Now let us look at the last one. We have got the book so far. We have got the Holy Spirit. Now let us look at your prayer life. Here it comes. The theory behind prayer. This is why you have to see this before you understand where we are going. This is like explaining the rapture before we got into Romans 8, explaining the millennium before we got into the great passages. You have to understand the theory of prayer before you start to put it in your life.

This thing here right here, it is what that is called, called the altar of incense. What is that, Bob? That is an altar that when you come through the Bible and study it, and you will find in Exodus chapter 30 verse 1, it was right next to the Holy of Holies. What they did is that they made incense. They mixed that incense with holy oil and they burned that incense on this golden incense burner right here, and it gave off a smell. In fact, it was so somewhat thick that it almost produced a haze or a cloud in that room, and it gave off a smell that you could smell everywhere in that tent. My friend, that is a picture of your prayer life. This thing here was to burn 24/7. You know why? Because the Bible says that we are to pray without ceasing. That is why. It is one of the most incredible concepts of your prayer life.

For you to have an effective ministry, you have got to know the theory behind the Word of God, the Holy Spirit. I have already, we do this all the time. I have already given you this. When we study the Holy Spirit of God in Romans 8, now you are getting this one. You are getting this one. Turn over to Revelation chapter 5. Look at verse 8:

Revelation 5:8

And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

See that thing? Now that is why on New Year's Eve, when we went through the Song of Solomon, you find that woman, a picture of the church, always connected with smelling good. Always some kind of perfume, always some kind of a pleasant odor that she is giving off. It is a picture of our prayer life. You are going to find it over and over and over and over again, that the church is represented as a virtuous woman who gives off an incredible smell that when God smells it, it builds Him to the point where He even loves us more. We do it in an earthly sense down here. Women buy perfume to lure men. Men buy cologne to lure a woman. Lure. That is

what we do. We think, you know what, they make billions and billions of dollars every year off you what you smell like. You will buy this and you will buy that and you will, it is called by seductive name, Obsession. Like if he smells it, he will be obsessed with you. Chance Encounter. Holstein. Personally, my favorite.

I want you to see something here. You do not have to turn to it. But I want you to write this down. I love it. This is what I, this is why I love the Bible. This is why I just years ago, there are things like this that there is nothing in this world that holds my attention like this book. Exodus chapter 30 verse 23. In that passage, they talk about making. They actually give you how they make the incense. It is one of the most incredible thing. I love this is what I love about the Bible. This is where when I say what I say, 90 to 90% of the time, it is based absolutely on the principles in the Bible. I do not make anything up very often. Very often.

But you are coming down there and it tells you how to make the incense. It says in Exodus 30:23 that they have to take "principle spices." I like the word "principle." In other words, any spices would not do. They have to be principle spices. You know why? Because there are principles by which your prayer life has to operate. Then they take those principle spices and what do they mix them with down in verse 25? The holy oil. Picture the Holy Spirit of God. When you mix the principles of the Word of God, principle spices, and I guarantee you, and I will never figure it out, but you list those spices down through there. If you could figure out what those spices represent to God, you would have you something on prayer. I do not have a clue, so do not ask. Please do not run up and tell me you figured it out in the last three seconds.

But those principles spices are there for a reason and they mean something. I mean, the myrrh, I know you get into that casket of stuff and all that other stuff, you find that stuff over in the Song of Solomon, but I have no idea, no idea. But I know this. You take the principles of the Word of God, i.e. the principle spices and you mix them with the holy oil, the Holy Spirit of God, and it gives off a smell through your prayer life. That is pleasant to God.

I do not mean to be crude. I do not mean to be gross, but I have been known for that before. So what is the point? Basically speaking, brethren, I am saying our, not yours. You know what our problem is? Our prayer life stinks. It gives off the wrong odor. Because this whole thing of our Christian walk with God is based on how it smells. The problem with you and me is our prayer life stinks. God is expecting one smell and He is getting something else.

You know what the Bible says over the, have you ever been around a dead corpse that has been dead for a long time? Have you ever been around a dead corpse that has been bloated with flies all over it, to the maggots has been decomposing or maybe a bunch of them? You get a whiff of that and I do not care if you have not eaten for three days, you will be puking up your guts over on the side of the road. You know why? The smell is such a stench that it just invoked you throwing up.

Have you ever read Revelation chapter 3 where the Bible says that a church, God says the Laodicean church, our church, the church period we live in, "Because you are neither cold nor hot." He says, "I am going to spew thee out of my mouth." The stench of the church's prayer life has made God so sick that He throws up the church right out of His mouth. Think about that for a

while. Our prayer life stinks. That is the problem. God throws the spews, the representing angel, which is our candlestick out of His mouth because the stench of this church is so bastardly terrible that God cannot stomach it.

Here is why and here is the key to the reason why God does not hear 99% of God's people when they pray and it is based on the fact that you have got the wrong heart. I am going to show you something. I am going to show you probably the greatest single thing you ever found out about you and your relationship with God. You know what? Some of you will do with this exactly what you do with everything else I give you.

Turn back to Numbers chapter 3. We have already established the fact that this thing here is a picture of your relationship with God and this particularly here is a picture of your ministry. We have already established the fact that there has to be a theory behind ministry. There has to be a theory behind everything that we do. Just doing it without knowing why we do it. It is going to mess us up. There is a theory behind ministry and it is based on three aspects: the Word of God, there is a theory behind the Bible; the Holy Spirit of God, there is a theory behind the Holy Spirit of God; prayer, your prayer life, there is a theory behind our prayer life.

Now look over at Numbers chapter 3, verse 1:

Numbers 3:1-4

These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai.

And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.

And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

You can take yourself. We know Aaron is the high priest. We know that. You can take Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar and you can put us in those four guys. They were the sons of the priests that worked under the high priest that did the work inside this area, which we now know is a picture of our ministry. They dealt with the shewbread, Word of God. They dealt with the candlestick, Holy Spirit of God, and they dealt with the incense altar, your prayer life.

Now watch what happens. This is the reason. This is the absolute reason. We know now why God does not hear the prayer of an unsaved person, but this is the absolute reason why God does not hear the prayers of 99% of His own children. Then I throw most of you into the category of grace. You heard me say that. Do not ride that bike too far. Tires will go flat.

Numbers 3:4

And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

The fire to light this incense. The fire, listen to me, the fire to ignite your prayer life. The fire to light that incense, which represents your prayer. That fire to light that had to come off of that brazen altar right there. In other words, ladies and gentlemen, if your prayers do not go back in their fundamental theory to Christ's death on the cross, then you are offering strange fire.

You know what those boys did? They got fired from a bit. They got fired someplace else. God killed them because the fire to light that brazen altar, which had to be a picture of our prayer life. That is a prayer of our prayers going up to God. Your prayer has to go back to what God did for you on Calvary's cross.

Now how do you say, how do you do that? Do not you remember? Do not you remember just what three or four months ago on a Thursday night, somebody asked me the question about the great passages in the Bible that showed us the real sufferings on the cross that Christ paid for your life and for my life. I took you through Job. I took you through Psalms. I took you through Isaiah and I showed you most hour by hour. In some cases minute by minute, the agonizing mindset of Christ dying on the cross. I showed you in the Old Testament when He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" I took you behind the curtain and showed you how the devil and the demons were tormenting Him through the scribes and Pharisees. I showed you His agony. I showed you the price that was paid.

Most of you, if not all of you, get exactly with that what you will do with this. It made no difference in your life. When you come to prayer, it is not about what Christ did for you. When you come and ask God for something, it is not about what He did for you. It is about what can you do for me today? That is strange fire. You never go into prayer based on just what you think your needs are. You take them back and realize when you understand that your prayer, whatever you are asking, whatever your need is, when you run it back through the cross and see what He went through for you. You may not even ask Him anymore to solve your problem because you are going to get a perspective that He went through some things for you and my dear friend, we are going to have to go through some things for Him.

But what do we do? Every time we run to God, "Bail me out, get me out. Oh, help me God fix this, take it away." We wonder why our prayers do not get answered. We wonder why God does not hear the prayers of the Laodicean Christian. I will tell you why, because you have kindled your fire from the wrong place. Your prayer life does not go back to the cross. It goes back to your problem. It goes back to what you want. It goes back to what you think you need. It goes back to you ordering God around and telling Him what is best for you because you know better than He does. It is not putting yourself in a submission mode where you look at what you are going through and then you liken it back to the fire off of that thing right there. It is about the jam you got yourself in. It is about the violated principles that you put in your life. We have done them and now we are faced with the consequences. All we know how to do is say, "Oh God, get me out of this mess."

Well, there was a time when God's Son basically said that to His Father. "My God, my God, why hast He forsaken me?" Not only did He still get forsaken, He never even got an answer. In the death of Christ on the cross lies every answer to why you and I do not get what we think we ought to get. The problem with God's people today is the problem with Aaron's two boys. They were priests. They did the work, but they did not get the fire for their prayer on the right altar. God killed them for it.

Leviticus 16:12

And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil:

That tells you clearly that that fire to light that incense comes off the brazen altar, the crucifixion. You know what that tells me? That tells me that any prayer that does not have its original point source at the cross and the sufferings of the cross to compare with your suffering, the God's prayer request or Christ's prayer request to His Father and your prayer request to your Father, you have to put them in the same context. That is why it entails that most of our prayer is absolutely worthless before God because we have kindled it off another fire.

Three pieces of furniture, ladies and gentlemen, for the work of the ministry after salvation and each one of them have a theory behind it. You are either going to be like me when I played the trumpet and not know the theory and become an okay Christian, but never really mean anything to God because you do not have the theory behind what you are doing. I have got to tell you, I have been a halfway guy all my life. I never gave any more than I thought I had to just to get by. That is just my character, my makeup. It caught me a lot of trouble sometime, but that is where I was.

The only thing in my life, and I can say this before God this morning, the only thing in my life that I have never done halfway, the only thing in my life, and I could not tell you today why it is different there than it is before. But the only thing in my life, the only thing in my life that sets me apart from the halfway measures, I did it and cutting across the field and finding a shortcut and doing it my way. The only thing that I ever did right by the book, down the line, by the principles was when I got into that book. Everything else in my life, I did it my way. I was good at it. You talked to, heard me talk about Jacob a couple of weeks ago. You are looking at Jacob before I got that thing settled. I could find a way to get it done, do it right, make it look good and put it off as being the real deal when it even was not. But boy, and I do not know why it is. I could not tell you today why it is, but I thank God that it is this way. The only thing in my life that I ever did right, the only thing in my life that I ever did right after getting saved was the way I approached that book that I quit cutting the corners and I did it by the principles. That is why I put them to you all the time.

That is why, and maybe you can see it now, trying to study prayer. It would have just been another one of the little rinky-dinky sermons you would have heard from a little rinky-dinky pastor. It would have been another little, another little sermonette you could get on a cassette from a little preacher. It would have just been another little nice little thing that you could have laid out and you could have went home and felt all nicer. Without understanding the theory

behind why you pray, without understanding this level of involvement in your life of how you need to make this thing work, we might as well forget it. There is a theory behind your prayer.

Now we have got some of the misconceptions out of the way. We now know that your life, if you are going to be the man of God that perfects his ministry or the woman of God, it says that the man of God may be perfect, not sinlessly perfect. None of us are going to be sinlessly perfect, but you can be perfect as to the ministry, you will never be perfect in your life, but you can be perfect in your approach to the ministry and the ministry now has been defined. The Word of God, the Holy Spirit of God, and your prayer life. Those are the furnishings that you need to provide inside of you that you as the priest all your life until Jesus comes, you are going to work in that area of that great Tabernacle, your body. It is going to be based on the Word of God, you showing the Word of God, the seven-pronged candlestick and your prayer life, the altar of incense. Doing those three things will perfect you.

You cannot ever, ever, ever, ever come to the place that you do not, you go to God in prayer without understanding that the fire from that incense that is going before God's nostrils has to go back to the day He died on the cross and what He suffered for you. You see, we do not like suffering for Him. We really do not. We are very casual type Christians. Yes, we are. We do not like to be inconvenienced. We do not like to have any problems. We do not like to have any glitches in the system. We want everything to run nice and smooth so we can just live our life down here. But the real Christian life just is not that way. For you to deal in your prayer life accurately and honestly with God, you need to have a fire kindled that goes back to His sufferings and understanding the price that He paid and realizing that you must pay that price too.

One of the greatest verses we are going to get into in Romans chapter, in the book of Romans, Romans chapter 12, where it says:

Romans 12:1

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

He was the dead sacrifice that you might be the living sacrifice. But the prayers are the same. The sacrifices are the same. The heartaches are the same. The trials are the same. I am going to show you in the weeks to come. I am going to show you as a Christian what you have a right to ask God for and what you do not have a right to ask God for. We will learn some things about prayer.